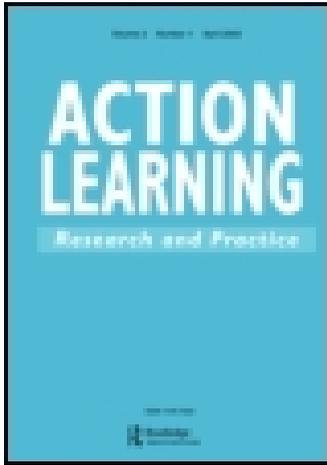


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### Exploring the challenges in scaling up the delivery of action learning facilitator training within a global organisation

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## ACCOUNT OF PRACTICE

### Exploring the challenges in scaling up the delivery of action learning facilitator training within a global organisation

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Action learning is often used as an element of leadership development programmes. The intention is to support classroom learning with an experiential thread which runs throughout the life of the programme. Action Learning Associates (ALA) has been working with an international organisation for three years to deliver the global 'First Line Manager Programme' (FLMP). The action learning facilitator training (ALFT) programme is designed to enable participants to run action learning sets in their operational companies across the world. Originally created in English – the official business language – the ALFT is now also delivered in French. The focus of the paper is to explore learning, challenges and opportunities created by scaling up the delivery of ALFT to a global target audience of approximately 700 people. To date ALA has trained over 165 internal action learning facilitators from different countries, languages, cultures and professional backgrounds. The value to the participants of being skilled to run their own action learning sets, within the context of the FLMP, is explored along with the opportunities for organisational development and learning.

**Keywords:** action learning; organisational development; leadership development; experiential learning; international organisation; first line manager; action learning facilitator training; scaling up delivery; working in a second language; cross-cultural learning; Operating Companies; Reg Revans; cultural diversity; virtual action learning; ripple effect; evaluating action learning; train the trainer

## Introduction

In this account of practice, we discuss a long-term Action Learning Facilitator Training (ALFT) intervention, the context in which it takes place, the role of Action Learning Associates (ALA) as service providers, the individual and organisational learning so far, the challenges and opportunities encountered, and how, to date, the intervention has been evaluated.

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## **Background and context**

### ***The client***

Since 2011, ALA has been working with a global drinks manufacturer to develop internal expertise in action learning set facilitation. The company, founded in 1864, has its headquarters in a major European city. From humble origins as a family business, the company has grown to become a global brand. Today, it is the second largest drinks manufacturer (by revenue) in the world, operating 190 breweries in 70 countries. The business model includes the acquisition of local drinks manufacturers and the setting up of local Operating Companies to manage them. Depending on market conditions, the company works to maintain and grow local brands and uses its global experience to support local development. For a company this size, fully empowering its diverse and geographically dispersed workforce is a major challenge.

### ***The development programme designed by the client***

The company launched the First Line Manager Development Programme (FLM-DP) in 2011 with the objective of targeting 7000 First Line Managers (FLMs). An FLM is defined as an employee who has responsibility for managing two or more employees. FLMs taking part in the programme represent all areas of the business including production, bottling, brewing, sales, training and human resources (HR). The FLM-DP is consistent with the company's strategic priority, which is to drive 'personal leadership, interdependence [collaboration] and disciplined professionalism'. As a manufacturing company, there is real reliance on people working in these frontline positions. The need for the programme was originally identified through business climate surveys that highlighted the challenges of stepping into this first line management position. It was clearly established that FLMs have a direct impact on motivation, engagement, retention and, consequently, business performance. One of the findings of the climate surveys was that some Operating Companies recruit people but fail to support their ongoing learning and development. The survey identified that people new to the company need business, functional and leadership development if they are to be successful in their roles.

Following the climate surveys, the FLM-DP was designed using a participatory approach. It comprises five training modules spread over 10 months. These are supported by action learning sets which run alongside the taught input. The FLM-DP modules include an introduction to the FLM-DP itself; a module to help FLMs deal with their day-to-day challenges (such as motivation, time management, delegation and so on); a team performance and effectiveness module (team effectiveness, conflict management, performance management, influence and persuasion); a leadership module (including leadership styles, communicating effectively, understanding the business) and a module on managing change (covering the impact of change and the company's standard change model).

Consistent with the company's operating practice, the deployment principles mean the modular framework is delivered locally, with the regions themselves deciding priorities in terms of content, criteria for selection and implementation. Practically, local implementation means translating materials, identifying if there is a need for local trainers, defining roles for local HR and adapting content depending on existing development offers.

### ***The role of ALA***

ALA train action learning facilitators who go on to facilitate the action learning sets which provide a central role within the FLM-DP. Groups of up to 18 managers attend ALFT in Europe. While the majority of training is conducted in small action learning sets, the event is structured so that sharing across the larger group is maximised. This initial facilitator training is delivered face to face. Follow-up virtual action learning (VAL) sets are designed to support the participants as they start to facilitate their own action learning sets within the FLM-DP.

On production of a reflective learning log participants are examined and, if successful, become accredited action learning facilitators with the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM).

The following countries have been represented at ALFT events: Algeria, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Bulgaria, Burundi, Congo Brazzaville, Czech Republic, Dem. Rep. of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Rep. of South Africa, Réunion (France), Romania, Russia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Korea, Spain, Surinam, Switzerland, Tanzania, Tunisia, the UK and the USA.

### ***ALA's action learning model***

Working with such a large and geographically dispersed organisation over a long period of time, we realise the importance of consistency both in the model of AL that we use and in our practice as facilitators. The model of action learning used is the classic Reg Revans approach and based on Revans' equation  $L = P + Q$ .

$L = P + Q$  demonstrates that L (learning) is the sum of P (programmed knowledge – what we know or think we know from information sources such as books, teachers, colleagues, on-line sources etc.) plus Q (questioning insight – the asking of insightful questions to get to the heart of the problem through the testing and exploring of our thinking and feeling, our understanding and our assumptions). The equation is further explained in Revans' 'ABC of Action Learning'.

Using this model, sometimes referred to as the 'classical' model, we work to develop people's capacity to ask fresh questions rather than communicate

technical knowledge. What this means in practice, in the FLM-DP context, is that newly trained participants facilitate sets for people in first line positions and enable them to present on the real-life work issues they face day to day.

## **Learning for all those involved**

### ***Learning for ALA***

For ALA, the experience of scaling up for delivery reinforced the value of a strong team and a single shared action learning methodology. Consistent project management and administrative approaches were required to manage the number of events, the participants, sets, locations, travel, visa applications, ILM liaison and teleconferences. Working on this scale means that forward planning is crucial. While most workshops require three ALA trainers, some have been smaller. The workshops in Kinshasa, Lagos, Bucharest and Monterrey were each delivered by one ALA trainer but the consistent approach to action learning means that we can confidently compare learning, impact and challenges across workshops.

Expansion of the programme produced the requirement to deliver facilitator training in French. The additional work required to translate materials and support ongoing amendments in two languages was under-estimated, with the French-speaking ALA facilitator taking on more of the administrative tasks and in-country liaison than would normally be necessary. Where groups are mixed linguistically, we have found that we can run ALFT programmes in French and English at the same time, with large group interaction in both languages. This approach has supported the peer networking and cross-cultural learning which is so valued.

The richness of learning when working in a second language led to a published article exploring the nature of language in action learning sets. This article was published in the *Training Journal* and is available for download at <http://actionlearningassociates.co.uk/downloads/communication-beyond-language.pdf>.

Working in French in a mixed nationality context means that it is likely that one will be working with others whose mother tongue is not French. The potential for misunderstandings can, therefore, be greater. One participant described action learning as

Un exercice à la fois simple et complexe.

He went on to say that while action learning itself (i.e. the process, the steps you go through, what you do) is simple, how you think, feel and behave in response may be hard to articulate and make sense of and may need sophisticated language to explain. Finding the right words to express your response requires careful reflection and translation.

Working in a second language requires a facilitator to strip down explanations and forces closer examination of his or her own understanding. It also gives licence to check meaning, clarify what is being heard and ask naïve questions, all of which can support a presenter in creating his or her authentic narrative, which can be referred back to. In checking meaning and asking naïve questions the facilitator models ‘not-knowing’. Where participants come from cultures where having all the answers is expected – or, at least, where it is assumed that that is the case – being encouraged to start problem-solving from a ‘not-knowing’ position can be liberating, even revelatory.

Such culturally diverse groups have provided much insight into the context in which action learning sets will be run. Within our own groups we have constructed exercises to explore diversity and actively value it. One exercise asks participants to describe the benefits of action learning to their set in their mother tongue. Through this exercise the set discovers languages some of its members may never have heard before (e.g. Lingala, Creole, Flemish, Igbo, Hungarian, Swahili, Finnish and Berber), or languages they are surprised to find familiar (e.g. Serbian and Russian) or strange new sounds (e.g. Zulu ‘clicks’). Diversity is emphasised and, in a set where trust and mutual respect have been established, it is valued, enjoyed and embraced.

### ***Organisational learning for the client***

The programme started with a high profile pilot project, with individually selected participants and a high level of Global HR support. The original intention was to train external as well as internal facilitators. Once the ALFT events got under way, however, and the value of building action learning facilitation expertise was realised, this intention was reversed with the deliberate aim of building internal capability.

For some Operating Companies where only one action learning facilitator is trained, running more than two sets at a time has been a barrier to implementation. This lack of capacity to facilitate more sets has created bottlenecks for those wishing to participate in the FLM-DP. With increasing capacity, as more trained facilitators become available, this problem will be eased if not eliminated.

Organisational benefits are being noticed with many departments having better-prepared managers. A recent participant commented that action learning will change the organisational culture. When asked how, he said that

People are starting to work better as a team,

and

... that it now feels OK to say you have a problem so long as you're trying to work on it.

Another participant commented:

Careful use of the [action learning] methodology ... can lead to a better work climate where employees feel valued and more involved in finding solutions to problems ... that can lead to general performance improvements. (Translated from French)

### *Learning for the ALFT participants*

The majority of participants train in action learning facilitation and immediately go on to facilitate their own sets. Written and verbal feedback demonstrate the value of applying the new skills quickly. On a few occasions, participants who appeared to find action learning process and principles difficult to grasp in the ALFT workshop, sometimes actively struggling with it, went on to successfully run their own sets within FLM-DP. While virtual sets provide ongoing support for newly trained facilitators, they report that 'just doing it' results in better outcomes than they anticipated.

Trained facilitators consistently report this programme has significantly enhanced their skills of facilitation, reflection, giving and receiving feedback, coaching, asking open questions and active listening. One participant from Romania reflected that we are 'pre-programmed' to find solutions. When there's a problem we rush to solve it. She learnt that:

[Action learning] gives the presenter an excuse to find his or her problem [before going into solution mode]

and that

... there's an art in asking the right question, the question that makes a difference.

Beyond this, action learning sets have supported facilitators in strategic partnering work with the business and in employee relations. The skills developed directly build the ability to develop employees to greater independence and potential. In some Operating Companies there is also evidence of a new-found respect for 'subordinates' who, on being given opportunities to offer ideas, have been able to show initiative, creativity and frontline problem-solving talents, which may have been hidden or suppressed in the previous command and control culture. One senior manager who participated in the ALFT, when talking about resisting the temptation to instruct and direct, commented (with a smile):

The biggest benefit [for me] is that I do less of other peoples' jobs. I tended to think for everybody and tell them what to do. Now they think for me and tell me what to do!

The same senior manager solved a long-standing staff retention issue by building trust, asking pertinent questions and listening to the answers:

In different societies you need different lengths of time to win trust and confidence. You get some surprises! I landed in a society where everything is ‘yes’ ... but every man has his strategy. Using this [action learning] methodology I began to gain their trust and confidence. I looked into the reasons for leaving. Simple! We placed them on a 3-year contract. They had no option. As soon as they got a permanent job elsewhere – even at a lower rate – they left. Having found the root cause I gave feedback to HR and we changed the contracts.

Inter- and intra-operating company networks have been created where newly trained facilitators offer mutual support. The process is viewed as a self-discovery method. Where facilitators have come from line positions outside HR, they report the ALFT experience as one which transforms their ability to manage line relationships and increases their confidence and success in problem-solving.

### ***Learning for FLM action learning set participants***

The action learning sets are what gave the sense of continuity to this [FLM-DP] programme. It has the glue effect, linking the FLMs to each other and to the programme. (FLM feedback following the pilot)

Participants are using the action learning sets to address real business issues, with themes including dealing with difficult employees, delegation, knowing how to influence or challenge one’s manager, managing priorities, changing roles, redesigning structures and processes, managing performance, developing potential and problem-solving. They report learning more about the business and building links across the functions in a way not done before:

It is an effective tool not only for learning, but also for facilitating networking and cross-functional interactions.

The action learning skills of active listening and asking open questions are being transferred into the participants’ line management relationships with people reporting the ability to have better conversations in their teams. Direct reports are being challenged to think through work problems for themselves and as a result of this new coaching approach, team problem-solving is increasing and FLMs are performing better in their roles:

It makes the FLM more effective on the job by being able to get the best from his team.

## **The challenges to sustaining successful delivery of the ALFT**

### ***Changes within the client organisation***

When the original FLM-DP was launched, its creators had a very clear vision of the programme and what they wanted it to achieve. As the programme has evolved, internal personnel involved at the early stages have left the organisation and others have joined. Changes in the HR hierarchy have led to changes of focus and sense of ownership. The strength of will to promote the programme and to commit resources may waver though we have no hard evidence to support that at present. Furthermore, as ownership of the ALFT moves in-house the responsibility to maintain quality standards will explicitly need to shift from ALA to the client and negotiating this shift has not yet been addressed.

### ***Selecting participants for the ALFT***

There is a sense that there is a move towards recruiting more ALFT participants from HR functions and fewer from other functions. Originally, ALFT recruits came from all parts of the business and recruitment was based on appropriate skill set rather than on business function. If this sense proves correct and the programme ceases to be jointly ‘owned’ by the business, it could become a largely HR initiative and risk losing the collaboration and enthusiasm of the wider business.

At the contract outset, ALA and the client agreed on a set of competencies for prospective facilitators. ALA, however, is not part of the recruitment and assessment process and the Operating Companies themselves choose who to send on the programme. While this works very well for the most part, the groups that are assembled are ‘mixed’ in every sense. They have different cultures, nationalities, talents, backgrounds, languages, education, expectations and needs. Participants are required to speak English (or French) but the level of fluency is variable. Some participants have completed part of their higher educations in the UK, the USA or France and are, therefore, fluent in English or French. Others only began learning English a matter of months before the start of the programme. If learning points need to be re-explained or translated then the process can stall and this can be distracting for the group. In one set, one participant was frequently called upon to translate for another. She reported finding this distracting and felt it had interfered with her own learning.

Difficulties with language have sometimes been apparent in learning logs. The logs may be difficult to read or interpret. By making sure we receive learning logs well in advance of certification meetings the logs can be read and returned, if necessary, with suggestions for improvements or with further questions to help draw out the key learning points. This has been an iterative process in some cases.

***The challenge of learning to reflect***

Individuals become conscious of themselves and their impact on others by reflecting on actions taken or observed. The capacity to critically reflect, which is a core element of the programme, is not always a well-developed skill. This may be true whatever the cultural or educational background. In the early stages some reflective learning logs simply recorded the steps of the ALFT rather than personal impact and learning. Clear explanations of what is meant by reflection, together with examples, some learning theory and the modelling of reflective practice by the ALA facilitators help deepen participants' own reflective practice and consequently raise self-awareness and ability to learn from experience.

***The 'type' of education participants bring to the programme***

Participants from some regions have experienced severe disruptions in their schooling: gaining an education has been a battle for them. For example, one participant spent his first 10 years in a refugee camp. It then took years to re-settle in his home country. During this time his schooling was frequently interrupted. Other participants are from countries in conflict where lack of security has held them back. This was true of a participant who was a child during his country's civil war. He had suffered from severe malnutrition with associated long-term consequences for his health. Another had grown up in Soviet Russia – she said Soviet life had been characterised by never quite knowing what was true or not true and she was anxious about how that might play out in an action learning set where honesty and authenticity had been set out as key principles. For her, allowing herself to trust in her action learning set required a leap of faith.

Where individuals in a set have different educational experiences they may feel, or be seen as, 'superior' or 'inferior' and, consequently, be over- or under-confident. The ALA facilitators' challenge has been to find ways of encouraging and enabling all set members to contribute in their own way and to value others' contributions.

***Making Virtual Action Learning (VAL) work globally***

The programme includes a number of VAL meetings each of which lasts three hours. In some countries where telecommunications are not reliable, there can be difficulties establishing and maintaining connections. Lines with too much interference create a further barrier to communication where participants are working in a second language. In VAL it is important to guard against technology becoming the centre of attention and so the basic medium of the telephone is used, as this tends to be the most reliable option. Where interruptions are a possibility this is discussed openly before the virtual session starts and all

agree how the process will be managed should an interruption occur. Normalising disconnections and interruptions relaxes participants and maintains their confidence and commitment.

### **Potential opportunities for the client's continuing organisational development and for ALA as the service provider**

#### ***Working regionally and in more languages***

When we started the facilitator-training programme, all participants came to Europe. This is expensive but offers opportunities to learn with and from colleagues from around the world. Participants place a high value on this opportunity. More recently, there has been demand to deliver training in regional hubs. Developing the regional training offering creates opportunities to reduce environmental impact and costs to the client though it does take away the prized international networking opportunity. In late 2012 and early 2013, ALA delivered ALFT in French in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Regionally delivered programmes in other parts of the world offer promising opportunities to produce more learning coaches more quickly and there is potential to scale up further by delivering ALFT in other languages (particularly Spanish, Portuguese and Russian).

While the current programme is aimed at supporting FLMs, there is no reason action learning interventions cannot support leadership and development programmes at any management level or in other areas of the business. In one UK Operating Company, for example, action learning is being used to support sales training. Related interventions in other parts of the client's business, such as coach training, have been requested and recently delivered.

#### ***The ripple effect: the consequences for organisational change***

To date, ALA has trained approximately 165 action learning facilitators. More than 1800 FLMs from 35 Operating Companies have attended the FLM-DP and have, therefore, experienced action learning.

There is evidence from the reflective learning logs of the ALFT participants that there is a ripple effect of changing behaviour. Feedback shows that action learning skills are being used in all areas of work and not just in the action learning sets. In addition, qualitative evaluations and verbal feedback show that participants are beginning to rely on listening and questioning skills where before they would describe themselves as 'directive'. They are noticing that there are benefits to engaging with their teams and some talk about feeling 'closer' to their teams. Others talk about the effect of the coaching style of management on individuals' longer-term ability to take responsibility, be more creative and act independently. While these outcomes are commonly documented with regard to participation in action learning sets, they should not be

under-estimated in this context. Participants from cultures (national or organisational) where there are well-defined hierarchies that are fixed in terms of position in organisation, job title and even ethnic identity are accustomed to being told what to do and are, in turn, accustomed to telling other people what to do. A reflection from one learning log describes how, on return to work following participation in the ALFT, the individual struggled with a problem until he remembered that there was a ‘Papa’ (an older and subordinate colleague) in the brewery with 40 years of experience. When consulted, the Papa solved the problem in ‘less than 15 minutes’. The inference from the learning log is that before the programme, the participant would not have consulted the subordinate and would have thought that, as team leader, he should find solutions on his own.

### ***Developing the Master Coach programme***

Over the last 18 months we have been developing the Master Coach Programme. This is an internal facilitator-training programme – a train-the-trainer programme – which offers a new level of learning. To date we have five master coaches in training. One has delivered facilitator training programmes on her own or with a colleague (also a former participant), two have delivered internal training programmes in collaboration with ALA and two have just shadowed ALA trainers in preparation for delivering their own ALFT programmes. There is scope to expand Master Coach training in all the regions.

### ***Leveraging social media***

The ALFT programme offers opportunities to work closely with international colleagues: this is a powerful and memorable experience for the vast majority of our participants. There is a potential opportunity to leverage social media to maintain these networks and to keep action learning principles active in the everyday life of the organisation. For example, the creation of a LinkedIn group for former participants would offer discussion forums for sharing and developing practice.

### ***Opportunities to feedback into AL practice***

Opportunities to learn from or link to existing cultural practices in the various regions can surely feedback into our action learning practice and enrich it. One example is the ‘Mbongui’ practice used in DRC. This is the village practice of resolving community problems and settling disputes.

One internationally experienced African participant, when asked what he had learnt from working in several different cultures, said:

Have respect and demonstrate respect. Leave arrogance outside and don't imagine you know more than others. What you meet on the ground as practice don't kick it away, find something good, learn something from them and blend it with what you bring . . .

### ***Developing virtual working***

The global presence of the organisation lends itself to virtual working (for regions where telecommunications are reliable). ALA already delivers Virtual Action Learning Facilitator Training (VALFT) programmes. VALFT could be a useful addition to this organisation's development portfolio. There is obvious potential to save on travel costs and reduce environmental impact. The challenge here is to convince both decision-makers and participants that working virtually is an effective, first-choice option and not a deficit or second-rate option.

### **Evaluating the ALFT programme**

Evaluation takes place throughout the programme. Sets review how they work together after each presentation. This allows opportunities for giving and receiving feedback, for hearing others' feedback and learning from it, for analysing group dynamics, for clarifying behaviours and for evaluating openly one's own contributions, other people's contributions, the facilitator's contributions and the action learning model itself. In this way, practice is continuously evaluated, developed and fine-tuned.

A second-level qualitative evaluation is taken at the end of the ALFT when participants complete an evaluation form. ALA facilitators and the client review all evaluation forms and the feedback is used to further develop the programme.

The third level of evaluation is conducted by the organisation itself. Following the pilot study, four groups were interviewed in order to evaluate the impact: the programme participants themselves; the FLMs (those individuals following the FLM-DP who participate in action learning sets between their FLM-DP modules); their supervisors and local HR Supervisors. All observed that participants who had a predominantly directive management style now used their listening skills more. FLMs noted that their general style of working had changed and that their new approach involved listening more and asking open questions to encourage independent thinking. Programme participants felt they had developed their coaching and facilitation skills and that these were valuable skills that they could use in all walks of life.

### **Conclusion**

As stated above, the client has 70,000 employees worldwide and operates in 70 countries. ALA's associate model lends itself to the scaling up of delivery to

tackle these large numbers without compromising quality of delivery. The latter is achieved in several ways:

- colleagues working closely together on programmes agree how they will work together and how they will provide feedback to each other;
- regular internal ALA associate meetings create opportunities to review work completed or in progress together with specific topics such as values and ethics; in this way associates establish a common understanding of what we expect of ourselves, of each other and of our practice as ALA;
- associates working on any ALFT programme will have shadowed ALA's Managing Director before delivering any programmes and will, therefore, have the opportunity to experience the methodology in action and
- more informally, associates use each other as a resource for coaching expertise, when designing training materials or events, in sense-checking interventions, for developing opportunities and for solving problems.

The ALA associate model lends itself to scaling up delivery in terms of numbers to be trained, format of delivery (language, size of group, location, face-to-face or virtual), maintenance of quality standards and client liaison. While associates who deliver the ALFT programme have had face-to-face contact with the client and built close relationships, the contribution of ALA's professional administrators should not be underestimated when considering success factors. Meticulous administration is essential for clear contracting and the building of a strong, professional relationship; for the quality and supply of the training materials; in day-to-day liaison with the client; for organising programmes and virtual meetings; for contact with the ILM; and for timely and accurate invoicing.

ALA can support very large global programmes with our train-the-trainer approach so internal master coaches can be developed who can then train others in ALFT. As the numbers trained grow, ALA has less control over what happens on the ground in terms of further numbers trained and quality of training. There is a set of banked materials which helps with standardisation but future quality measures will need to be internally controlled.

We have found that within the developed ALA methodology, we can adapt delivery to be successful regardless of prevailing cultural norms. While we maintain a high standard and use the same materials consistently, we have been flexible in our approach drawing on our experience and backgrounds when needed. At times we have had to confront some challenging group dynamics. Through experience, confidence in the methodology, peer support and the added bedding-in time offered by the virtual meetings which follow the ALFT programme, we have been successful in enabling the vast majority of participants to, at the very least, take out of the programme new skills they can use and develop back in the work place.

The mix of face-to-face and virtual delivery works well and allows continuity of training at reduced environmental and financial cost. It also allows participants to become familiar with VAL and they begin to realise that VAL does not have to be a second-class option, but can, in fact, be a very effective alternative way to conduct a meeting.

People from different regional, national and functional groups feel connected through the ALFT. Learned or improved competencies are being transferred into the work environment on a daily basis:

... my roles as action learning facilitator and production manager go really well together because every day I'm right there with the FLMs and their direct reports working on solving problems. (Translated from French)

Throughout ALA's relationship with this client, mutual learning has been woven back into the programme and has been used to modify, adapt and develop it. Even so, standing back and writing this article is a strong reminder of what a privilege it is to be involved in organisational development of this size, scale and quality.

While we have captured a great deal of learning, there will be some organisational learning that has slipped through our fingers. Thinking about the numbers of people trained, the action learning sets that they have then gone on to facilitate, their daily interactions using new-found skills and management styles and the general ripple effect that has been reported verbally and in reflective learning logs, it is useful to think what could have been missed and how we might better capture the organisational impact of an intervention such as this in the future.

### **Notes on contributors**

Sonja Antell has been a long-term associate with Action Learning Associates and as of 2013 is a Director. She brings 10 years' commercial consultancy experience, latterly with Cap Gemini, to her work as an independent consultant specialising in action learning facilitation and training as well as team and organisational development.

John Heywood has been an associate with Action Learning Associates for nearly 10 years. He has worked in the BBC and at Cancer Research UK in Project Management roles. Since 2005 he has worked as an independent consultant specialising in action learning facilitation, executive coaching and project management. He is the current Chairman of the International Foundation for Action Learning (IFAL).