

Transcript of ENHANCE Podcast Episode: Voices of the Multipliers – Experiences and Impact of a Participatory Education Process Part 2

Recorded by: das kollektiv

Introduction

Welcome to the second episode of the podcast series *Participation in Action*. My name is Kim Carrington, and I will be moderating this conversation.

With me are Norzia, Tamana, and Parasto, multipliers from the *Moving On* project.

In the first episode of this series, we heard from three multipliers from the *Moving On* project at *Das Kollektiv*, who spoke about their experiences within a participatory process and about how this process began with trust, long before any decisions were made.

In this episode, we continue listening to the multipliers and follow the participatory process as it becomes increasingly complex.

Here, participation is no longer only about being invited. It is about negotiation, about differences, and about how power operates even within spaces that aim for inclusion.

The multipliers speak about moments of disagreement, contradictory perspectives within the group, and how individual experiences collide with structural realities.

This episode makes one thing very clear: participation does not automatically lead to consensus. And that in itself is not a failure. It is part of the process.

You will hear difficult questions emerge: Who speaks for whom? Whose experiences count as representative? And how do we remain in dialogue when views fundamentally diverge?

This conversation challenges romanticized ideas of participation and instead shows that participation is something demanding and deeply political.

Let us begin by listening to how participation feels from your perspective.

Kim

So regarding this transfer and acceptance of power, what do you think is actually needed for that? And what are the conditions that make it easier for a group of multipliers to do the work that you did?

What does it take to enable this transfer of power, this shared decision-making?

Tamana

Regular meetings. Open conversations. And Gergana's support helped us a lot. Trust within the team was also very helpful.



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Kim

Okay. And was it like that from the beginning?

Did you notice anything at the beginning, when everything was still very new for you, compared to the end? What was your experience?

Tamana

When I joined a new team... I thought my German was not very good. I wondered: how am I supposed to do all this work? How am I supposed to organize this program? Which topics? And when you said we would do workshops, I thought: "Workshops? How do you even do that?"

Because it was also my first experience in Austria.

I kept wondering how I would do it.

But when we worked together as a team, it became easier and easier.

For example, we shared different ideas and opinions, and together we selected which topics and what we wanted to do.

We worked together, and that was good.

Kim

Okay, so these meetings—these regular meetings—meant that staying in communication and exchanging ideas was important.

And were there times when you did not agree with each other?

Through these discussions, did you continue talking until you found a solution? Or what was that like?

Tamana

Yes. For example, when we talked about something and did not find a solution, we would not say, "Okay, we only talk for one hour."

No matter how much time we needed, we sat together, talked together, found a solution, and then solved it.

Kim

Okay. But that requires a lot of time, doesn't it?

Roughly how often did you meet? You said regular meetings. Was it once a month or...?



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Tamana

We can say: as often as we needed.

Once a week, twice or three times, or once a month.

Whenever we needed meetings, we organized them.

Kim

Okay. And how were the meeting times arranged?

Were they simply assigned, or did you also discuss the schedules together?

Norzia

Yes, of course.

After meetings, we discussed together when we had time.

Because during that time we also had classes, we had to choose free times.

Together we selected dates and times when we were free.

Kim

Okay.

And what do you think? Is it difficult, for example, for a woman to participate in a group of multipliers?

Is it limited more to people who have a lot of free time?

Norzia

From my experience, I think the meetings were connected to each other.

If someone missed one meeting, then by the next meeting it was already a bit too late.

Because every meeting had its own topic.

And because everything built on each other, if a woman could not attend every meeting, it became a little more difficult.

That is my experience.

Kim

Okay. Please go ahead.



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Tamana

And when we organized workshops, we also arranged childcare.

For example, if a woman had children, she could come with them.

We had childcare here, and the children could play.

We also thought carefully about which rooms to choose for the children.

And we told the women that they could come with their children.

That made it easier for women.

Kim

I think that is wonderful, because you saw that childcare is very important so that other women can participate.

Was there childcare for the multiplier group itself?

Parasto

The first group of multipliers consisted of four people.

At that time, none of us had children.

But the new group includes many women who do have children.

Still, we organized the meetings so that the children would be in kindergarten and the mothers would have time to come here.

But if the children are very small or not yet in daycare or kindergarten, they are also allowed to bring their children.

And the meetings are not very long. They last only one or two hours at most.

So yes, it works, and it is an open offer for everyone.

Kim

Okay, interesting.

And besides time—because you said you yourselves did not have children—was there anything else that made participation difficult for you? Something besides time and a lot of work?

Parasto

Earlier you asked what made things easier, and now what made things difficult.

But yes... they are connected.



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What made things easier? I will answer the other question now, because they belong together.

It was our common goal.

When you have a goal, despite all difficulties, you find the time and try to achieve it.

And our goal was to improve something for ourselves and for others as multipliers.

Under “improvement” come many things: laws, rights, and everything else.

But what made it difficult?

I think I could say: always the new laws.

Because sometimes we would decide, “Okay, we can do this like that,” or “There is a solution for this,” or “I never thought there was a path like this.”

And then the next day you come back to the meeting and discover that new laws have already come into effect, the door is already closed, and you have to think differently again.

Kim

Okay.

So these are the external challenges—as a multiplier, as a learner, and also as a teacher.

These are things that cannot be changed very quickly.

But by acting as a multiplier within the group, you can influence them at least a little, right?

Tamana

We can say that every kind of work has difficulties and challenges.

But in this group, the planning between facilitators and participants was sometimes difficult.

For example, facilitators would say, “I can come from morning until evening,” but participants sometimes could not come often or came late.

That was also a problem.

Sometimes the facilitators’ schedules and the participants’ schedules did not match.

And we tried together to find a good meeting time.

A time that worked for both facilitators and participants.

And we found that and made it work.



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Kim

Okay. Was it easy?

Tamana

At first, no. But we tried a lot.

Kim

Okay, you stayed committed.

You said that you did not work alone, that you had support, but you also worked with teachers and educators.

In your role as multipliers, did you ever feel: “I want to decide this way, but a teacher has more power than I do, and I have to go along with the teacher’s decision?”

Did this power difference ever become visible in a decision-making process?

Parasto

I think the only thing that really had power was not the person, but the ideas.

No matter who had the idea or who expressed it.

What mattered to us was whether we needed that idea.

If someone had an idea and shared it—whether it was me, another participant, a teacher, or someone else—it did not matter.

What mattered was what we would do with the idea.

Whether it was important or not.

Every idea is important, but the question was whether at that moment we could really work on this issue or not.

Or whether it was only my private experience, or whether other migrant women also had similar experiences.

That was the only form of power.

And I think everyone could decide and say something without thinking about status differences.

Kim

Okay.

Was it also like that for the rest of you—that you did not really feel a difference between teachers, counselors, and multipliers?



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Norzia

I can say that everyone was equal, because everyone was given time to express their opinion.

And in the end we summarized these opinions together and then found a solution or selected something.

So there was no difference.

Kim

Okay, yes.

And what about information?

Maybe I should return to the question of what made things easier.

Did you always feel that you had enough information to make decisions or think things through?

Parasto

Sometimes yes.

Actually, it was always like that.

For the next meeting, we would think about what we needed.

We had a Signal group where we communicated with each other.

For example, before the next meeting someone would say: "Okay, we are talking about this topic."

Then others would send websites and all kinds of information.

And if someone had questions, they could write them down and then bring them to the next meeting.

We always had enough information.

Kim

Would you say the same?

Tamana

Yes.

Kim

Okay.



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Thinking about your own experience and the experiences within your group: what would you keep in order to maintain this process as positive—as I hear it, it was a positive experience.

What would you keep, and what would you change about the process of involving learners?

Tamana

I would definitely keep the protected space for women.

This space created trust and encouraged women to speak openly and take responsibility.

And if I could change something, I would wish for this form of collaboration to receive long-term support.

Kim

Do you think it is important that something like this is easy to implement in all educational programs?

What do you think?

A process with meetings, exchanges of information, and participation in decision-making.

Is it easy to create something like that?

You also mentioned a safe space.

Tamana

Yes.

Das Kollektiv is also a large space for women.

We can say that everyone at *Das Kollektiv* supports women and treats women with respect.

And we also learned here how to support one another.

We also said that we want this project to continue and receive long-term support.

Many women said they also wanted to work as multipliers.

At first, we were four people, and now other participants have also joined the multiplier group and continue working with us.

Kim

Wonderful.

So your experience of helping shape things encouraged others to want to have this experience as well.



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Did I understand that correctly?

Tamana

Yes.

We spoke with other participants and explained how things worked here.

Others saw us and maybe became motivated because they said: “We want to join too.”

And now we also have a multiplier group, but we can say it is a large multiplier group.

Kim

Okay, so more work—not less work, but maybe even more work.

Tamana

Yes.

Kim

Okay.

And you already mentioned what is necessary in order to support a multiplier group successfully.

You mentioned regular meetings, lots of communication, discussions, and actually participating in decision-making.

And you also said that this all took place at *Das Kollektiv*.

I hear that for you this was a positive and successful experience.

My question is: do you think something like this could—or should—exist in every institution?

Norzia

Yes, I think so.

But the goal is important.

When a group works together, first there is the topic, and then the goal.

If everyone shares a goal and then forms a group and works together on it, then the goal is important.

Kim

Okay, a shared goal.



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Norzia

Yes.

Some people may not only want to work on women's issues, or others may prefer different topics.

I think the goal is important.

Kim

Okay.

Tamana

I think that if more women worked in multiplier groups or worked for women, there would be fewer problems for women.

For example, we worked with women on many different topics.

Or we can say that we held workshops on different topics.

Women gained understanding about different issues.

For example, if we held four or six or seven workshops, then they understood seven different topics.

But if many organizations worked like this, women would understand many more topics.

And women would understand more about the future.

And continue moving forward and face fewer problems.

That is what I think.

Parasto

That others can also do this.

I was thinking about this earlier, but it did not come to my mind until now.

Every voice counts.

For example, we were four people here.

That means four voices.

And if others do the same somewhere else, and there are four people in another organization, then there are three or four more voices.

And if everyone comes together, then it becomes like a society.



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And it grows more and more and more, until eventually there are no problems left.

That is how I think about it.

That is why every voice and every experience needs to be told.

People need to start somehow, no matter where, to tell something and to do something for improvement and change.

Kim

Okay.

And that is actually a multiplication effect.

It keeps spreading and reaches more and more people.

That would be ideal.

Thank you very, very much.

As a final question, I would like to ask whether there is anything else you would like to share with us.

Parasto

Regarding your last question—what I would like to keep.

Sometimes people say: “No, that was not so important.”

But I take all the little things with me.

Because every small thing and every big thing counts as experience.

At some point, somewhere, you need it, and it helps you.

That is why I take with me all the important meetings we had, the collaboration, the solidarity, and teamwork as a skill.

I would keep all of that.

And what we could add are individual conversations.

We did not have that.

We always had meetings where everyone was together.

I hope that maybe another team could sometimes also have one-on-one conversations with a counselor.



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Kim

You mean as multipliers?

As multipliers.

And these individual conversations—that is important information, right?

Parasto

Exactly.

Sometimes things happen within a team that you cannot talk about in front of everyone.

Of course, we had many other opportunities here—there is counseling, teachers, and we could always come—but not specifically as multipliers.

At that time, we needed a special appointment as multipliers: an individual conversation with counselors.

Kim

Okay, so that is something you think should be changed.

Parasto

Exactly.

Kim

Okay.

Are there any other changes, suggestions, or ideas?

Parasto

Our role did not require previous experience.

We did not need to already have experience in order to participate in the project.

I think the only experience needed was living for some years as migrants in another country.

And through that, you collect many experiences that you can then share with others.

Norzia

At first I was not part of the multiplier group.

I asked Tamana and Parasto: “How can someone participate in this group?”

And I was also a little afraid.



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What if I could not do something? How can someone participate in a group?
 But when we had meetings together and worked together, it was not difficult.
 Because first everything was explained well to me—the topic and what we needed.
 Then we thought about it, shared our opinions, and discussed it together.

Parasto

What others could do is trust migrant women.
 And what helped us was exactly that—the trust of the organization, *Das Kollektiv*.
 They trusted us to take on this role very well.
 No matter what language level we had—whether we could speak fluently or not.
 And yes, I think the first step is trusting others and then giving them the opportunity.
 Exactly.

Kim

Okay.
 And is this the first time that an organization or institution trusted you or gave you this opportunity?

Tamana

Yes.
 When I first came to *Das Kollektiv*...
 I had studied something in Afghanistan, and they told me about *Moving On* and asked me:
 “Would you also like to join the multiplier group?”
 I said: “My German level is only A2. I do not understand much German.”
 But they said: “Yes, you can do it. Come.”
 And I signed up.
 They trusted me.
 And as I continued, I tried to do something and improve my German because I was part of this team.
 And because of that, I became better and better.



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I can say that first Gergana trusted me, and because of that I was able to do this.

Kim

Okay.

So have other institutions given you this trust?

Parasto

No.

Kim

Okay.

Do you think every institution is capable of trusting you?

Not whether you can do it or not.

But whether an institution says: “Okay, we are doing this. We trust them.”

That they also participate in decision-making.

That institutions trust enough to give up a bit of power—or transfer power—to migrant women.

Parasto

What makes *Das Kollektiv* very important and special for migrant women is that they always do things that others have not done.

And they give migrant women opportunities that nobody else has given.

I also had many experiences with other organizations.

That does not mean I was never there.

But as you said, they may have been capable of trusting me and giving me an opportunity, but perhaps they did not take the risk.

Maybe they did not decide to do it, or I do not know what the reason was.

But I never received invitations like the ones I received here.

Norzia

I would like to say something.

When a migrant woman comes to another country, everything is new, and language is also important.



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Organizations or people who can do something should give migrant women opportunities and motivation.

Because entering a new society is difficult—starting work or connecting with other people.

And I wish there were places where migrants could begin.

At the beginning there are many difficult points.

But after the beginning, things become easier.

That is my wish.

Tamana

And I also wish that organizations like *Das Kollektiv* existed all over the world for women, in different countries.

When a migrant woman comes to a new country, she thinks: “Where do I go? What do I do? Where do I start?”

And if there is an organization like *Das Kollektiv*, then she can go there and begin and find her path.

For example, many migrant women who come to Austria—especially to Linz—hear from other migrant women that there is an organization here that helps women.

And when we came to this course, we asked different women: “How did you manage this? How did you find your way?”

And the facilitators and teachers told us: “You can continue here from literacy courses all the way to university or vocational training.”

For example, in *Moving On* we received support on how to find vocational training, how to have our certificates recognized, and how to continue our education.

That was very good.

I wish there were organizations like this in other countries as well.

Parasto

What I want to say at the end is that there is nobody in this world without abilities or competencies.

Everyone has their own.

Some people understand things quickly, others more slowly.



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And I think what others could do is have patience and give us a chance or opportunity to find ourselves.

It is not easy, as the others already said, to come to another country and suddenly achieve everything.

It does not happen all at once.

We need time, patience, and also the trust of others.

Somehow we need to begin.

And for that beginning, for that start, we perhaps need an organization or maybe even just one person.

Someone who tells us: "Yes, you can do everything. You are enough."

And that there is nothing impossible in this world.

Kim

Thank you very, very much for this wonderful conversation.

I wish you all the best for your continued work as multipliers, whether here or elsewhere.

And I am sure that you will continue multiplying.

Parasto

Thank you as well.

And I wish all the best to the other multipliers and to us too—for our future lives.

Yes, definitely.

Exactly.

Conclusion

This episode reminds us that participation is not a space in which all multipliers automatically share the same opinions.

It is shaped by different histories, opportunities, and lived realities.

Remaining in this process means living with discomfort without silencing conflict.

The experiences shared here also point beyond individual interactions.



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They raise questions about responsibility, moderation, and the limits of the contexts in which participatory projects are carried out.

In the next episode, we shift perspectives.

We move from the experiences of the multipliers to those of the staff members, teachers, counselors, and coordinators who work within open structures but are constrained by larger institutional frameworks.

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