



THE ROLES OF THE VOLUNTEER IN DEVELOPMENT





Capacity Building Toolkit 4

VOLUNTEER AS CO-FACILITATOR

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VOLUNTEER AS CO-FACILITATOR

KSA MATRIX AND LEARNING PLAN



CO-FACILITATOR ROLE	KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDES
Knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) you need for this role	Knowledge of sector-specific groups and projects; group dynamics theory; leadership styles; types of decisions; participatory methods	Listening, questioning, encouraging others; team building; facilitating group tasks; decision making, e.g., consensus; conflict resolution; co-leading meetings; modeling	Willingness to share leadership; trust in group process; patience and perseverance; respect for diversity
Your initiatives to learn more (Make a plan)	What knowledge you still need and where to find it: — — — — —	Skills you need to gain or improve and how you might work on further skill development: — — — — —	Things that will help you change any attitudes that will hinder your role: — — — — —

WHAT IS A CO-FACILITATOR?

A co-facilitator *assists* the community in deciding what it wants to do and then *partners with* the community to get the work done. As a co-facilitator, the Volunteer works jointly with a Counterpart or another community member to guide the group through a process to identify and discuss goals, make decisions, and carry out tasks that positively affect their well-being. He or she models good leadership and stewardship but makes sure the decision-making rights and responsibilities remain with the community.

In some ways, the role of a facilitator is like that of an orchestra conductor. They both try to ensure that all members of the group participate and contribute their unique talents, that the group is clear on what is to be accomplished, and that the group works smoothly together. However, there are two significant differences in their roles: (1) A conductor chooses the composition the orchestra will play, while a facilitator assists the group in deciding on their own agenda. (2) A conductor has a set score to follow, but a facilitator needs to remain flexible and move with the group to successfully complete the group’s goals.

In capacity-building terms, the roles of “facilitator” and “trainer” are distinct, although they overlap in several key skill areas. For our purposes here, we distinguish between the two as follows: a trainer addresses specific requests from individuals or groups for new knowledge and skills relevant to



their goals and pursuits; a facilitator guides a group through a process of expressing ideas, analyzing issues, making sound decisions, and building relationships. If you anticipate doing a lot of group facilitation *and* training, you will benefit from both of these toolkits.

Facilitation is an exciting and challenging role, but it requires excellent language skills and an understanding of the local culture and community issues. As a Volunteer you are likely to have opportunities to become involved in the facilitation of meetings and other community activities, and sometimes it will be appropriate for you to “take the lead.” Much of the time, however, it is more productive to help a local person develop the skills to serve as facilitator.

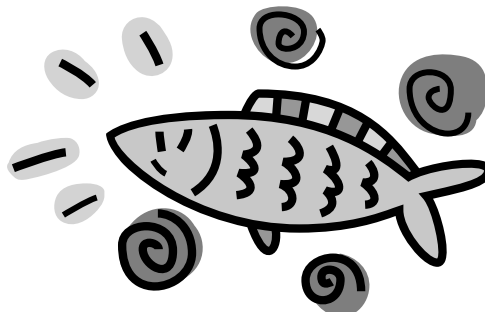
EXAMPLES OF THE CO-FACILITATOR’S ROLE

1

Sam, an Agriculture-sector Volunteer, and the Director of a local Farmers’ Association have decided to co-facilitate a series of meetings between association members and a Municipal Planning Committee about road construction and other transportation issues in the surrounding geographic area. The Association Director has been involved in informal discussions with the Planning Committee for several months and now the two groups will need to sort through several controversial issues and make decisions that will have long-term impacts on the area. Since Sam has a strong relationship with both of the community groups, the Association Director considers him an ideal person to help organize and co-facilitate the meetings. Sam spends considerable time planning with the two group leaders before they hold the first meeting.

2

Judy, a Small Business Volunteer, joins with the leader of a women’s group to co-facilitate a team-building workshop with the women at the start of a small-scale income generation project. The group is newly formed and this is the first substantial project they have undertaken. The group leader is anxious about her high-profile role and wants everything to work smoothly. Judy helps the group leader identify the goals of the team-building sessions and suggests several activities. Once they have their plan in place, they discuss how they will co-lead the sessions. During the actual workshop, Judy limits her time in front of the group and uses participatory activities to focus group members’ attention on themselves and their leader. As part of the closing session, Judy asks the group leader and members to make suggestions about how she might continue to support the group as they begin the income generation project. After the workshop, Judy meets with the group leader to debrief and make a plan for next steps.



3

Matt, an Education Volunteer, has been working for a few months with an extracurricular youth group. They have concentrated mostly on environmental care and now several of the strongest group members want to convene a town or neighborhood meeting to raise awareness and issues about youth participation in local government. Matt believes this meeting has the potential to be strategic for legitimizing the youth group's efforts and galvanizing needed support, but also risky in terms of alienating local leaders who may perceive the youth agenda as too radical. When he first started working with these young people, he never imagined they would get so involved! Through analyzing the situation, Matt realizes that he needs to engage another teacher or an interested person from the local community to team with him in guiding the group and helping them clarify their agenda to take to the public.





Capacity Building Toolkit 4

MODELS, CONCEPTS, AND CASES

QUALITIES OF A GOOD FACILITATOR

Becoming an effective facilitator requires time and experience. Learning by doing is the best way. Nevertheless, there are certain qualities that enable someone to become a good facilitator. These are outlined below:

- Trust in other people and their capacities
- Patience and good listening skills
- Self-awareness and openness to learning new things
- Confidence without arrogance
- Respect for the opinions of others, not imposing ideas
- Practice in creative and innovative thinking
- Ability to create an atmosphere of confidence among participants
- Flexibility in changing methods and sequences, not always sticking to a preset sequence or agenda
- Knowledge of group development including the ability to sense a group's mood and change methods or adjust the program on the spot
- A good sense for the arrangement of space and materials in order to create an attractive physical arrangement for participants
- Skill in drawing and handwriting

[Adapted with permission from *VIPP: Visualization in Participatory Programmes*, p. 39. UNICEF, New York. 1993. (ICE TR124)]



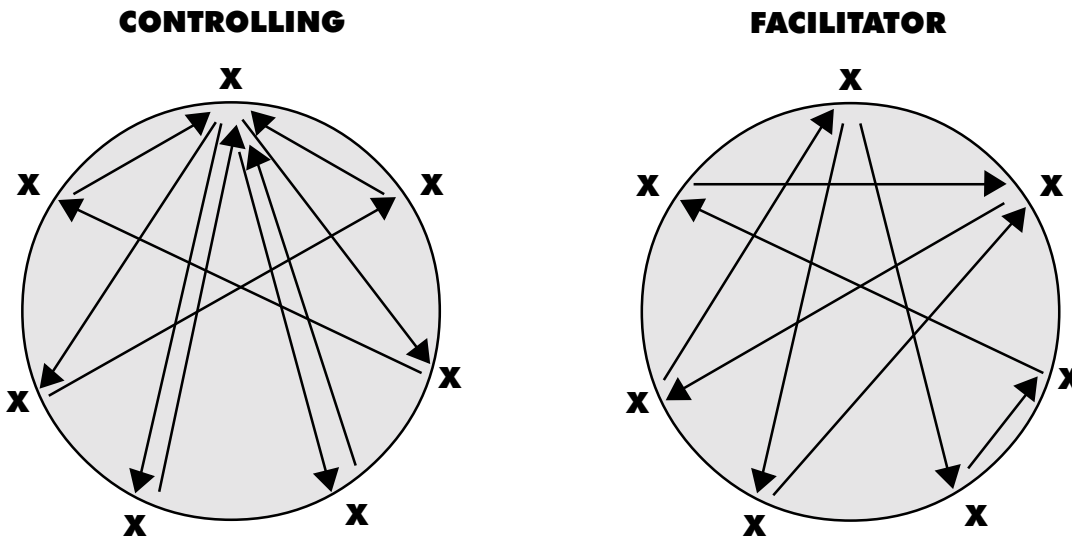


FACILITATING GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitation of group discussion is a skill that encourages the group to express and discuss its own ideas. The group is the reservoir of knowledge and creativity; the facilitator serves the group by building trust, remaining neutral, and not evaluating or contributing his or her own ideas. The role of the facilitator is to encourage the discussion, help clarify when necessary, assist the group in summarizing their ideas, and keep them “on task” and moving toward their goal. The facilitator is concerned about the process; he or she does not control the content.

Facilitation requires skills in asking questions, listening and paraphrasing, and summarizing. It also demands careful attention to what is happening in the group. The facilitator may need to encourage quiet people, move the conversation away from dominant persons, and deal with disruptive persons.

There is no prescription for good facilitation. That said, one good rule is to **let the group do about 95 percent of the talking**. Facilitators need to be aware of how much they talk. They should not dominate the conversation or be the focal point. The diagrams below show the difference between controlling and facilitating a discussion.



Facilitators need to tolerate silence—even enjoy it! Silence can mean various things: a lack of understanding of a question or of the process, confusion, thinking or reflecting, or needing time to translate ideas and language.

Facilitators need to consider how the group views them. Often, non-verbal behaviors—such as nodding the head negatively, or gesturing toward a point one supports—shows the group the facilitator’s point of view of what he or she expects from the group.

Specific skills that facilitators need are the following:

1. Asking Questions

Facilitators use questions to help group members bring out relevant information, clarify points of view, summarize information, and draw conclusions. These types of questions are particularly useful:

Open-ended – Can you give us some examples of...?

Probing – Will you explain a little more about that?

Encouraging other views – Can anyone provide another viewpoint or suggestion about this?

Summarizing – Will someone summarize the points presented so far?

2. Listening and Paraphrasing

Communication has been described as 80 percent listening and 20 percent speaking. Listening is a skill and a way of being with people. By listening actively, the facilitator tries to understand what a participant is saying, feeling, and thinking. The facilitator then checks for understanding by paraphrasing. The process of listening and paraphrasing is much like catching a ball and throwing it back. Listening and paraphrasing honor the contributions of the participants and also help to clarify issues for the group. Paraphrase starters:

What I heard you say was..... Is that correct?

I think you said that..... Is that right?

It seems to me, your viewpoint is..... Is that stated accurately?

You differ in opinion from Mary in that you think..... Is that right?

3. Summarizing

The purpose of summarizing is to:

- a. pull important ideas, facts, or information together
- b. establish a basis for further discussion or make a transition
- c. review progress
- d. check for clarity or agreement

Summarizing requires careful listening as it requires organization and systematic reporting back of information expressed. Summarized information ensures that everyone is clear about what transpired in that portion of the discussion. Wherever possible, encourage someone in the group to do the summarizing. Always ask the group or relevant members of the group “Does this summary capture your thoughts and ideas correctly?”

Starter phrases for summaries:

If I understand, you feel this way about the situation...

There seem to be the following points of view about this...

The group has presented these five issues so far...

I think we agree on this decision: what we are saying is that we...

[Adapted from *PACA: Participatory Analysis for Community Action*, pp. 114-116, Peace Corps, Washington, DC. 1996. (ICE M0053)]





UNDERSTANDING GROUP PROCESS

Every group has three basic elements, which exist at all times:

Structure: How the group is organized in terms of formal and informal authority and leadership; timing, location, and physical environment in which the group operates. Some groups have very little structure while others may operate in a well-defined and controlled structure.

Task: The reason the group exists; its task, work, purpose, and output.

Process: How the group works together within the structure to accomplish its tasks.

In group process, there are three basic needs that team members have:

- the need to **achieve tasks**
- the need to **maintain group cohesion** and well-being
- the need to **express** and satisfy **individual interests or desires**.

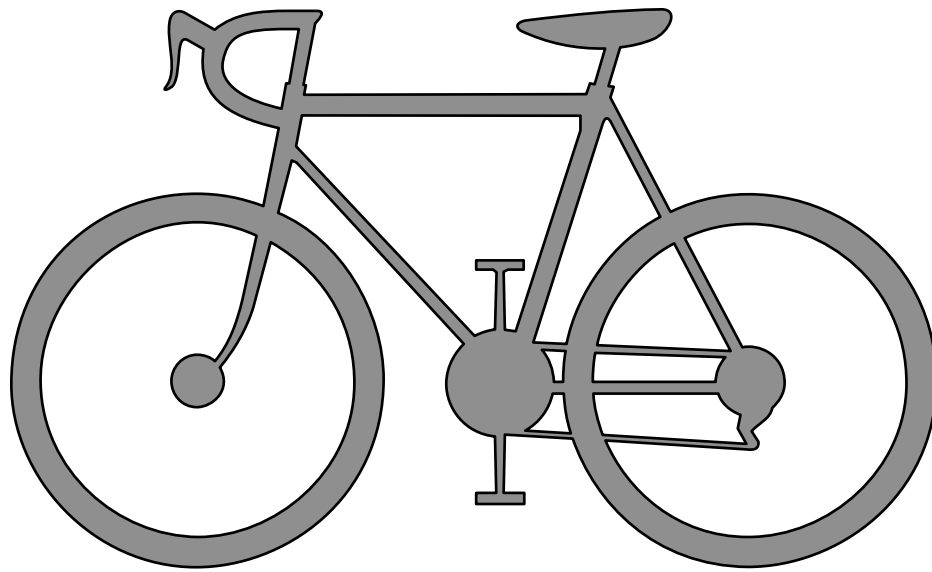


Everything people do during group interactions can be linked to one of these needs. Sometimes a group is focused too heavily on achieving the task and may forget to pay attention to the relationships among members. As a result, tensions may rise and simple problems may become “heavy.” Other times, the group may emphasize maintaining relationships so much that they don’t have time left to complete their tasks or they do them too quickly and sloppily. As a result, motivation of group members may decline and individuals may begin to lay blame on others. Sometimes when a group is under stress or has not developed well and members feel their needs are not being met, they engage in self-centered behaviors to try to draw attention either toward or away from themselves (e.g., dominate the discussion, clown around, withdraw).

You can encourage group members to play some specific roles that will promote a healthy balance between the functions of task (getting results) and maintenance (taking care of one another). A nice way to describe task and maintenance roles is to visualize the two wheels of a bicycle as shown on the next page. When you ride a bicycle, the front wheel steers you toward your destination, while the rear wheel stabilizes your motion and supports you on your journey. In a similar fashion, the task roles help the group reach its goals while the maintenance roles help group members feel supported and in harmony.

[Adapted with permission from *On Becoming a Better Supervisor: A Resource Guide for Community Service Supervisors*, National Crime Prevention Council, Washington, DC. 1996.]





**TASK ROLES
FOR MEMBERS**

- Initiate tasks and discussions
- Clarify the task
- Offer ideas
- Focus and summarize
- Make decisions
- Take notes
- Close

**MAINTENANCE ROLES
FOR MEMBERS**

- Be a gatekeeper—include everyone
- Encourage quiet members
- Call people by name
- Question and test for agreement
- Use humor
- Reduce tensions
- Keep time

[Bicycle metaphor adapted with permission from *Learning to Teach: Training of Trainers for Community Development*, p. 48, by Jane Vella. Save the Children, Westport CT. 1989. (ICE ED189)]

*“If the people will lead,
the leaders will follow.”*

— Ghandi



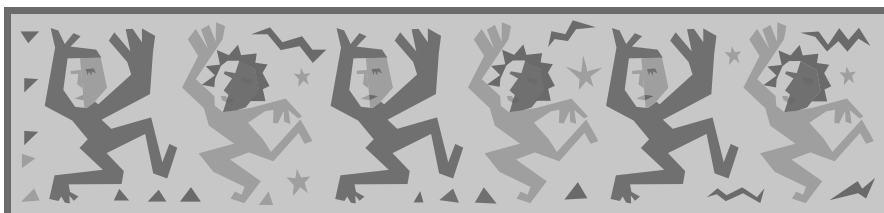


WORKING WITH DIFFERENT TYPES OF GROUP MEMBERS

Ideally, in a discussion all group members participate equally. Rarely does the ideal happen. Factors such as cultural protocol, age, personality type, and historical relationships among the various group members affect the ways in which people interact. It is the facilitator's role to encourage active and equal participation, working to keep disruptive or controlling behaviors in check so that they do not prevent the group from completing its task(s). Below are some general guidelines for facilitators to keep in mind as they encounter different types of interaction behavior among participants.

- 1.** Keep in mind the goal: to eliminate or minimize the behavior so that it does not continue to disrupt the group process or isolate some members from participating.
- 2.** Diagnose accurately; take time to think through:
 - What is the “problem” behavior?
 - Why is it happening?
- 3.** Wait to respond.
Give yourself time to assess the situation carefully.
Give the person a chance to change his or her behavior.
Give the group a chance to control the behavior themselves.
- 4.** Care about everyone in the group. Everyone has needs and should be respected. Try to address all group members according to what they need. Maintain the self-esteem of the person causing the problem by intervening carefully and appropriately.
- 5.** Take the appropriate action and follow-up.
Identify possible alternatives.
Select best alternative to minimize the disruption while maintaining everyone's self-esteem.

On the following page, we describe several “difficult” behaviors and potential actions to alleviate the problems. Since people's behaviors vary with the culture, review the list with your Counterpart or trainers and determine how relevant it is to the group dynamics you have observed in your local community. Use the worksheet on the second page to determine some “Possible Actions of the Facilitator” appropriate for your cultural situation.



WORKING WITH DIFFERENT TYPES OF GROUP MEMBERS

Type of Behavior	Possible Reasons	Possible Action of Facilitator
Domineering, controlling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eager • Well informed • Formal or informal leader in community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep silent; let group respond. • Recognize contribution and redirect to someone else. • Avoid looking directly at the person. • Establish a procedure whereby everyone contributes one idea before group discusses. • Ask person to summarize ideas so others can contribute.
Argumentative, uncooperative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combative personality • Hidden agenda • Personally upset by some other situation • Threatened • Forced participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify areas of disagreement and decide if they should be discussed now or “parked” for later. • Direct conversation away from person. • Let group handle him or her. • Set and reinforce group norm or rule that all ideas are acceptable.
Silent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timid, insecure • Never given a voice (due to age, gender, social class, or ethnic group) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage with eye contact or invitation to speak. • Speak to privately to find what she/he is thinking or feeling. • Use icebreakers and warm-ups to make the environment more comfortable. • Direct questions to this person when she or he has expertise or shows non-verbal willingness to speak.
Side conversationalists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to clarify, maybe through translation • Not interested in discussion • Culturally acceptable to do this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set group norms or guidelines at beginning of meeting. • Stop meeting and say everyone needs to hear everything. • Address needs for translation beforehand. • Make sure points are clarified throughout discussion.

Speak silver, reply gold.

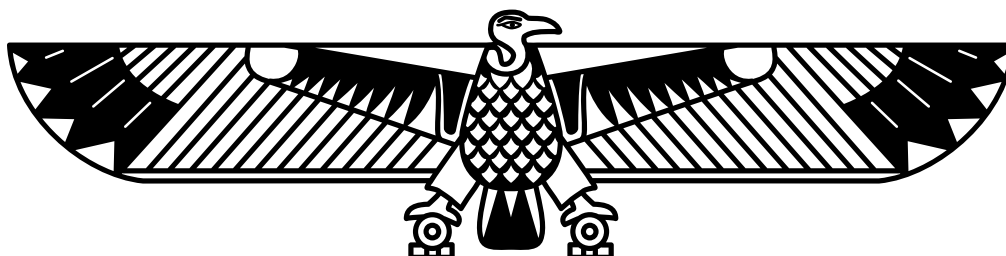
— Swahili proverb



MAKE YOUR OWN "WORKING WITH DIFFERENT TYPES OF GROUP MEMBERS" WORKSHEET

Type of Behavior	Possible Reasons	Possible Action of Facilitator <i>(fill in this column according to what you have observed in your community)</i>
Domineering, controlling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eager • Well informed • Formal or informal leader in community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Argumentative, uncooperative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combative personality • Hidden agenda • Personally upset by some other situation • Threatened • Forced participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Silent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timid, insecure • Never given a voice (due to age, gender, social class, or ethnic group) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Side conversationalists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to clarify, maybe through translation • Not interested in discussion • Culturally acceptable to do this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Other?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •

[Adapted from *PACA: Participatory Analysis for Community Action Handbook*, pp. 117-119. Peace Corps, Washington, DC. 1996. (ICE M0053)]





FEEDBACK: WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO GIVE IT

Feedback is a way of helping another person understand the impact of his or her behavior on others. It is a communication to a person (or a group) that gives that person information about how he or she affects others. Feedback helps people keep their behavior “on target” and thus better achieve their goals. It may be positive or “corrective” in nature, though people usually find it harder to give feedback that concerns negative behavior and impact.

As facilitators, we need to be able to offer feedback to group members and to solicit feedback on our performance from them as well. Examples of feedback in the context of group work might include:

- Giving feedback to a group member who is constantly dominating the discussion
- Asking group members to give one another feedback on how well they did a particular task (what worked about that approach? What are some suggestions that could help us do it better the next time?)
- Explaining to a team several positive ways in which it has developed and become more self-sufficient
- Asking your Counterpart how you could improve your process skills with the community groups with whom you work

Every culture has mechanisms for providing feedback, oftentimes in forms that are less direct than the typical Western approach. For example, many people use a third party (a friend, colleague, or relative) to convey constructive feedback rather than say it directly themselves. Sometimes people will use metaphors or stories to get across their message. In some cultures, “saving face” and avoiding confrontation are extremely important. Try to observe and find out what feedback approach is most appropriate for you where you live and serve. [See *Culture Matters*, Chapter 3, “Styles of Communication” (ICE T0087) for more insights about interaction in different cultural contexts.]

In North American culture, feedback is considered more effective when the following criteria are used:

- 1. It is specific rather than general.** To be told that one is talkative will probably not be as useful as to be told that “just now when we were deciding the issue, you talked so much I stopped listening.”
- 2. It is descriptive rather than judgmental.** By describing one’s own reaction to another’s behavior, it leaves the individual free to use it or not to use it as he or she sees fit. Avoiding judgmental language reduces the likelihood of a defensive response. (Judgmental:



“You don’t care about this project!” Descriptive: “You haven’t attended the last three work sessions and the other group members are having trouble keeping up with the tasks and staying on schedule without you. How can we get back on track?”)

- 3. It takes into account the needs of both the receiver and the giver of feedback.** Feedback can be destructive when it serves only our own needs and fails to consider the needs of the person on the receiving end. (Inappropriate: [Volunteer speaking to Counterpart] “I wish you’d helped me out more today when I got so tongue-tied in front of the group—I sounded like Tarzan.” More appropriate: “I know it’s considered impolite to interrupt, but I really need your help sometimes when I get flustered and tongue-tied with the language.”)



- 4. It is directed toward behavior that the receiver can do something about.** Frustration is only increased when a person is reminded of shortcomings over which he or she has no control.
- 5. It is solicited rather than imposed.** Feedback is most useful when the receiver has formulated the kind of question that those observing can answer.
- 6. It is well timed.** In general, feedback is most useful at the earliest opportunity after the given behavior (depending, of course, on the person’s readiness to hear it, the support available from others, and so forth).
- 7. It is checked to ensure clear communication.** One way of doing this is to have the receiver try to rephrase the feedback in order to see if it corresponds to what the sender had in mind.
- 8. It is checked with others to ensure accuracy.** Both the giver and the receiver of the feedback should check with others in the group as to its meaning. Is this one person’s impression or an impression shared by others?

How would the above list need to be modified to provide effective feedback in your host country?

[Adapted with permission from *Feedback Guidelines* by James McCaffery, Training Resources Group, Alexandria, VA, 1982.]



THE FACILITATOR'S ROLE IN GROUP DEVELOPMENT

STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

People get together to work in groups for many different reasons. Sometimes they need to work on one single issue for a limited amount of time. For example, if an agency will provide sewing machines only to women's sewing cooperatives, a group of women may get together to qualify to receive a couple of sewing machines. Once they have obtained the machines, the group disbands and the machines go to individual homes. Other times, people may want to work together in a sustained way to achieve medium- or long-range goals they hold in common. Whatever their goal and term of existence, all work groups move through several predictable stages of development as they grow from being a loose collection of individuals into more cohesive and productive teams. In reality, few groups ever reach the final stage of being completely self-sustaining.

As a facilitator, you can help your group(s) move through these stages more gracefully if you are able to recognize the specific stage they are in and offer the appropriate kind of support. As you read through the following descriptions, think about what you might do at each particular stage to help your group(s) grow stronger.

STAGE 1: FORMING

- Everyone is uncertain about what is going to happen.
- There is no organization and there are no officers.
- Members wonder about who they are, how they will work together, and what their roles will be.
- Establishing common expectations is the main issue.
- Leadership begins to emerge informally.
- Membership is relatively small.
- Some groups disband without ever getting beyond this stage.

STAGE 2: START PERFORMING

- The group has agreed upon at least a general purpose and has decided on an initial project.
- Some standard ways of doing things begin to emerge.
- Small successes are achieved; members are optimistic; no bad experiences have happened yet.
- Procedures and protocols for getting things done have become more established.
- Formal organization begins to take shape (elect officers, etc.).



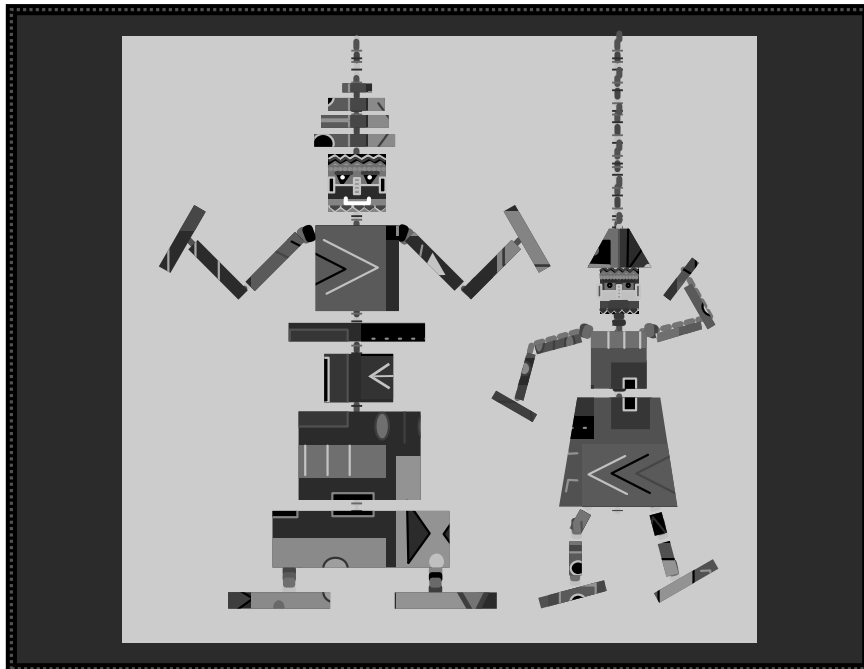
- Members begin to take the group seriously and believe in it.
- Commitment is high.
- Members feel that their goal is realistic and they expect success.

STAGE 3: STORMING

- Group experiences first crisis, a serious unexpected obstacle.
- Only two or three members come to an important meeting when many were expected.
- Hidden conflicts within the group emerge or become apparent.
- Members start blaming one another.
- Less commitment and a “wait and see” attitude develop.
- Dropout rate (or threats to drop out) increases.
- Less work is accomplished.

STAGE 4: NORMING

- Recovery from first crisis results in stronger organization and clearer objectives.
- Members know each other better and work together more easily.
- Active membership may be small, sometimes less than 10, but is effective.
- Others do not come to meetings regularly but help in other ways.
- Members are very strongly committed to group’s goals.
- Leadership is stable and well developed.



STAGE 5: HIGH PERFORMING

- Goals are likely to be achieved.
- Members are exuberant—“on top of the world.”
- Group is likely to receive publicity and favorable notice from the rest of the community.
- Local politicians and others who perhaps have been enemies in the past may approach group leaders. Group’s leadership may be invited to join the establishment.
- Self-confidence is at an all-time high.

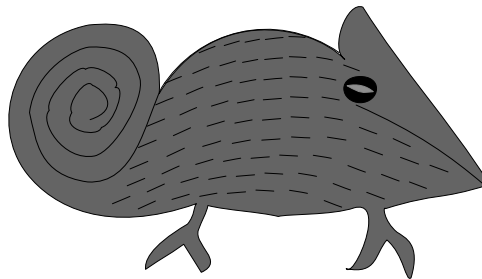
STAGE 6: ADJOURNING OR RE-ALIGNING STAGE

- Pace slows down; self-confidence turns into complacency.
- Number of people at meetings drops sharply. Some new members may attend one meeting, but they are not made to feel welcome and rarely come back.
- Commitment drops; members shift energies to their families or jobs which they may have neglected during the height of the group’s activity.
- Leaders become discouraged; some members, including leaders, may wish to retire. They believe they have made their contribution.
- Group’s action becomes social rather than issue oriented.

STAGE 7: SELF-SUSTAINING STAGE

Ultimately the group becomes stable and established in the community. Group is also acknowledged and respected in the community. It is no longer dependent on the Volunteer or other external groups for its survival, but rather has mutually beneficial partnerships with groups and individuals. It has developed effective procedures for carrying out essential functions, including:

- Planning and goal setting
- Accomplishing its goals
- Leadership development and rotation
- Problem solving and handling crises
- External relations and getting outside advice
- Evaluation



It may be helpful to think of the different stages of group development in the context of the Community Action Cycle (CAC). Typically, the “forming and start performing” stages of group development occur in the “getting organized” and “exploring the situation/setting priorities” phases of the CAC. The “storming” stage often occurs at the end of the “exploring the situation and setting priorities” stage and/or during the “planning together” phase of the CAC. The “norming” stage often occurs at the end of the “planning together” phase when plans are being finalized and coordination mechanisms put into place. The “high performing” stage often occurs during the “community action” and “participatory evaluation” phases of the CAC. Finally, “adjourning” or “realigning and self-sustaining” may occur at the end of the “participatory evaluation” phase. At this point, group members may renew their commitment to the same development focus and determine whether they would like to maintain the same structure, roles, and responsibilities and composition or change the makeup of the group (returning to the “forming” stage and “getting organized” phase of the CAC).

[The Community Action Cycle diagram and associated text is adapted with permission from *How to Mobilize Communities for Health and Social Change* (draft form) by Lisa Howard-Grabman and Gail Snetro, Save the Children Federation, Westport, CT. 1989.]

GROUP DEVELOPMENT STAGES IN THE COMMUNITY ACTION CYCLE



STAGES OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT AND YOUR ROLE AS TEAM BUILDER

For each of the stages described on the previous pages, there are some actions you can take as a facilitator that will help your group grow into a cohesive team. We list a few of these below. However, keep in mind that every group has its own personality as well as cultural norms, and as such, we cannot prescribe exactly what you should do. Talk to other Volunteers and their Counterparts who have been working with groups in your host country—what have they observed about stages of group development and what they have they done or are they doing to help build teams?

NORMING STAGE

The work of the Volunteer varies according to the amount of initiative shown in the group. In many cases, the Volunteer must be the “glue” that holds the group together. This may mean you will need to:

With any group—

- Get to know the members individually—what are their interests, concerns, lifestyles?
- Build a relationship of trust. Help people whenever possible and expect help in return.

With groups needing more assistance—

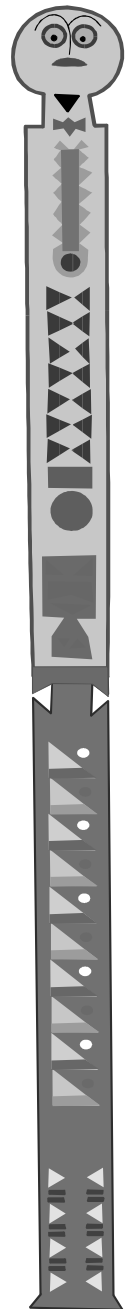
- Collect information on issues of importance to them.
- Lead initial planning meetings.
- Do intensive follow-up after the meetings to make sure that tasks are being carried out.
- Build commitment among members by helping them gain recognition.
- Help the group set realistic goals.
- Do everything you can to ensure the group’s first steps will succeed.

ADD MORE IDEAS:

START PERFORMING STAGE

You may need to still be directive at this stage, but begin to transfer skills and responsibilities to those in the group.

- Discourage overconfidence by helping the group maintain realistic goals.
- Anticipate problems that may be building beneath the surface and prepare the group for them.



- Encourage the group to expand its membership.
- Help the group improve its skill in getting things done, running meetings, performing the basic functions of maintenance.
- Reinforce the commitment of the members.
- Avoid taking credit for the group’s success—pass recognition along to the group members.
- Pass on information to the group.
- Encourage and help members to take leadership and responsibility even when this takes more time than doing it alone.
- Encourage group members to sign up for and perform routine duties such as making arrangements for the meeting place and so forth. The members should be doing these tasks now, not you.

ADD MORE IDEAS:

STORMING STAGE

Virtually all groups experience a fall—the idea is not to help the group skip over this phase, but rather to help them survive it, learn and grow from the experience, and move on to the next phase.

- Don’t get depressed.
- Help group members and yourself refrain from blaming other individuals in the group.
- Provide a little humor, a little perspective, and a lot of faith and confidence.
- Help the group analyze the reasons for the crisis.
- Train the group in problem solving and conflict resolution.
- Encourage the group to set new goals, if necessary.
- Help the group develop new leadership, if necessary.



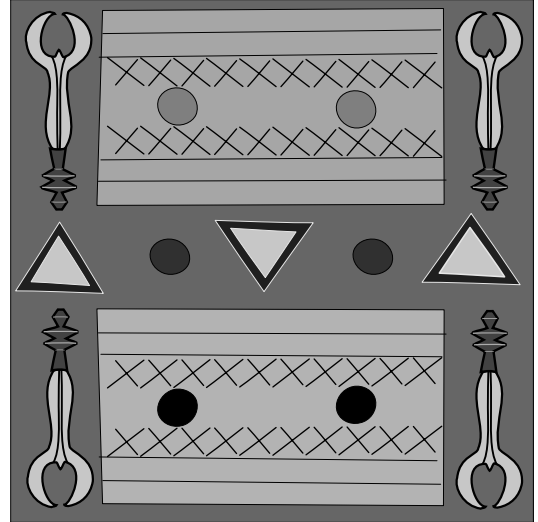
ADD MORE IDEAS:



NORMING STAGE

Skills transfer may be easiest at this stage.

- Pass the responsibility for planning on to the group as soon as possible.
- Train group leaders and others.
- Help the group develop and refine the essential processes to carry on. These include:
 - planning and goal setting
 - meeting and celebrating its goals
 - recruitment
 - leadership development
 - group maintenance
 - resource identification and mobilization
 - problem identification and solving
 - partnership building/networking (getting outside help and advice)
 - evaluation of the group's work and identification of areas for strengthening



ADD MORE IDEAS:

HIGH-PERFORMING STAGE

Strengthen and support the group; serve them as a resource.

- Encourage celebration of accomplishments.
- Refuse to take credit for the group's success.
- Help the group decide if it wants to continue and, if so, encourage members to begin looking for new opportunities and setting new goals.

ADD MORE IDEAS:



ADJOURNING OR REALIGNING STAGE

As necessary, facilitate the group's decisionmaking.

- Explain what is happening and discuss it openly; talk frankly about motivation and help the group make decisions about renewal or disbanding.
- If the group wants to continue, support them in setting new goals and work plans; help the group broaden its horizons.
- Help the group institutionalize the gains it has made so that they are not lost in the slowdown.
- Help the group find new members and rotate its leadership.
- Encourage members to draw on their networks and coalitions for support (e.g., new ideas, training, and so on).

ADD MORE IDEAS:

SELF-SUSTAINING STAGE

Share your admiration for their work with the group itself and with others.

- Feel proud for everyone in the group, including yourself.
- Look to this group as an example for others.
- Have members from this group work with you in other groups that may be at a different stage.

ADD MORE IDEAS:

[The description of group stages is adapted from the Tuckman Model of Group Development developed by Bruce Tuckman (1965) and from Peace Corps/Nicaragua training materials, including adaptation of the article "Guide for the Perplexed," reprinted in *VISTA CURRENTS*, AmeriCorps*VISTA, Washington, DC.]





SOLVING PROBLEMS AND MAKING DECISIONS IN GROUPS

Every group has issues and problems it needs to address in order to make wise decisions and move forward in its work. The basic steps for problem solving are:

1. Identify and clarify the issue or problem.

Group members must be clear on what the problem is before they take steps to resolve it. Since people may have very different perceptions about the issue, it's important to have each person offer his or her understanding and then push for better clarity. Sometimes you will need to break the problem down into smaller pieces and/or look for underlying causes in order to define it.

2. List the alternative solutions.

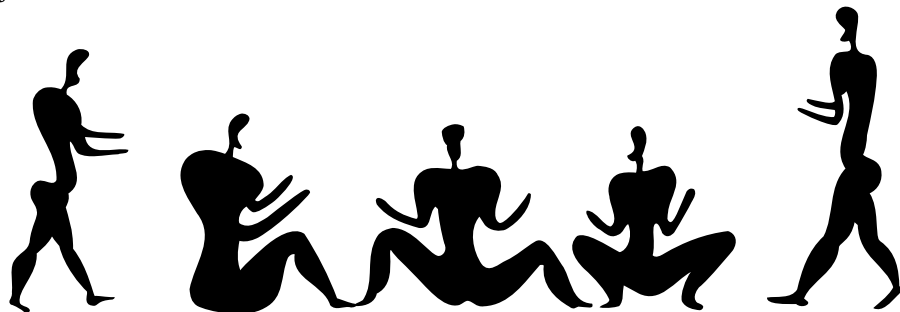
This is the time for creative thinking. Use a technique like brainstorming to get out as many different thoughts and ideas as possible. Don't prejudge ideas and don't jump too fast to select a particular solution. The result of this step should be a list of all possible ways to address the issue.

3. Evaluate the solutions and decide on the best alternative.

All of the possible solutions should now be reviewed to determine whether they are likely to solve the problem and whether their implementation is feasible. Techniques that may be helpful at this point are identifying the advantages and disadvantages of each option or applying a specific set of criteria for success. Sometimes the group analysis will produce a new option that builds on several of the earlier propositions. The result of this step is the identification of the most desirable option.

4. Implement and monitor the decision/solution.

To ensure that the decision or solution is carried out and has a chance to work, the group should devise a plan for implementation. The level of detail in this plan will depend on the complexity of the issue and the solution. At a minimum, the group should determine the action steps, resources required, and key roles and responsibilities. Monitoring involves checking the process and outcomes—are they having the desired effect? Is the solution working, and if not, what adjustments should we make?



PROBLEM-SOLVING AND DECISION-MAKING TECHNIQUES

TECHNIQUES TO DEFINE AND CLARIFY THE ISSUE/PROBLEM:

Round Robin – The leader goes around the room, asking each person in turn for his or her input.

Key Word Analysis – Each group member is asked to give his or her definition of key words in the basic problem statement. For example, if our problem is “we do not have access to quality health care services for our children,” then the key words to analyze include “access,” “quality services,” and “children.” (That is, what do we mean by access? What kinds of services do we expect and what is our standard for quality? Children up to what age?)

Nominal Group Technique – Each person writes down ideas before sharing them with the group, allowing everyone to think about the topic and offer his or her thoughts.

Graphic Illustration – Each member, either individually or in a team, illustrates the problem as he or she sees it, through drawings, cutouts, or illustrations.

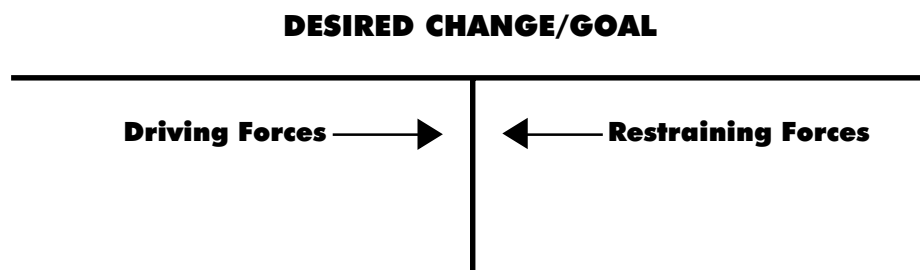
Role Reversal – Group members adopt one another’s roles in an effort to understand one another’s positions. For example, a teacher might ask boys and girls to switch roles to explore the impact of non-school responsibilities on their studies.

Problem Tree – The group constructs a visual diagram of the problem, showing its causes and effects. The “trunk” of the tree is the main problem, the “roots” are the causes, and the “branches” are its effects. The visualization of the cause-effect relationship helps to prevent the common error of solving only a symptom of the problem.

TECHNIQUES TO GENERATE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

Brainstorming – Group members generate as many ideas as possible for solving the problem. The facilitator records each suggestion and does not allow the group to evaluate or judge any of the ideas until the “storm” is over. (See the next reading in this section for more details on brainstorming.)

Force-Field Analysis – Group members work together to identify the forces driving toward or restraining against solving the problem or reaching the desired goal. Once they have identified the forces on both sides, the group looks for strategies that will strengthen the driving forces or, alternatively, diminish the restraining forces and allow them to reach their goal. The diagram below illustrates how the analysis is charted.



TECHNIQUES FOR REACHING CONSENSUS/ CHOOSING THE BEST SOLUTION OR OPTION:

Straw Votes – Straw votes are non-binding votes that “take the temperature” of the group. Each member votes informally by a show of hands. This technique usually enables the group to delete some solutions and concentrate on others.

Rank Order – Group members are asked to rank-order the alternatives. The least popular alternatives are omitted. [See the *PACA: Participatory Analysis for Community Action*, Peace Corps, Washington, DC. 1996. (ICE M0053) for instructions on different ways to use ranking with groups.]

Applying Criteria – The group identifies its criteria for an acceptable solution by completing the statement “an ideal solution to this problem would have these characteristics...” and then applies the criteria to each solution on the list. (See *Toolkit 2: Volunteer as Change Agent* and the *PACA: Participatory Analysis for Community Action*, Peace Corps, Washington, DC. 1996. (ICE M0053) for more information on this technique)

Weighted Voting – Each participant gets several votes (usually in a ratio of 1:3 in relation to the number of alternatives on the list) to distribute among alternatives he/she thinks are more desirable. Participants may vote more than once for items they particularly like. The most unpopular alternatives are eliminated.

Negative Voting – Ask if any member of the group cannot live with a specific solution.

Listing the Pros and Cons – The group identifies the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

SOME COMMON ERRORS IN PROBLEM SOLVING

- The problem is not clearly defined or the group does not have enough information to understand the problem.
- The problem is stated too narrowly. Only a symptom is dealt with—not the real problem.
- Tentative solutions are chosen too early in the process (before the problem is understood).
- Some major constraints to solving the problem are overlooked or ignored.
- Traditional solutions are preferred despite lack of effectiveness.
- An implementation plan is not developed or not well thought out.
- Resources needed to carry out a solution are not clearly specified and obtained early enough in the process.
- The cost (in time and/or money) of the solution is not weighed against the potential benefits.





HELPING COMMUNITY GROUPS ANALYZE AND PRIORITIZE ISSUES

DIFFERENT WAYS TO DISCUSS A LIST OF COMMUNITY OR GROUP ISSUES BEFORE SETTING PRIORITIES

Some of the following suggestions may provide appropriate ways to discuss the issues your community or group has identified as important. Depending on your list, select one or two ways to look at the choices—you need not use all of them.

1. Urgency
2. Level of interest or need: men/women/girls/boys, other differences
3. Resources—“doable” with locally available resources
4. Cause-effect analysis (for problems)
5. Scope or complexity—time involved, outside resources, and so on
6. Risk
7. Links to other projects, other organizations working on the issue, sources of support or information



POSSIBLE RANKING CRITERIA

Often ranking is done by using the criteria “Which is most important?” Though useful to know, it may be that the most important items are not ones within the power of the group or community to address. A second ranking using one of the suggestions below might bring to the top of the list more “doable” project ideas.

- Which can we do within a year?
 - complex vs. simple
 - short-term vs. long-term
- Which will benefit the most people?
- Which might bring the biggest impact?
- Which can we do with our own resources?

HOW (PHYSICALLY) CAN ITEMS BE RANKED?

- Traditional ways of decisionmaking (whatever means are culturally known and appropriate)
- Sampling various subgroups
- Discussion to reach consensus
- Voting
 - Physically placing votes (stones, corn kernels, etc.)
 - Voting by raising hands
 - Secret ballot



BRAINSTORMING AND LISTING

Brainstorming and listing are techniques that groups may use to explore and address issues of concern. Both techniques are extremely useful, but people often confuse them. Here is a description that will help you understand the distinctions between the two and use them appropriately in your work with groups.

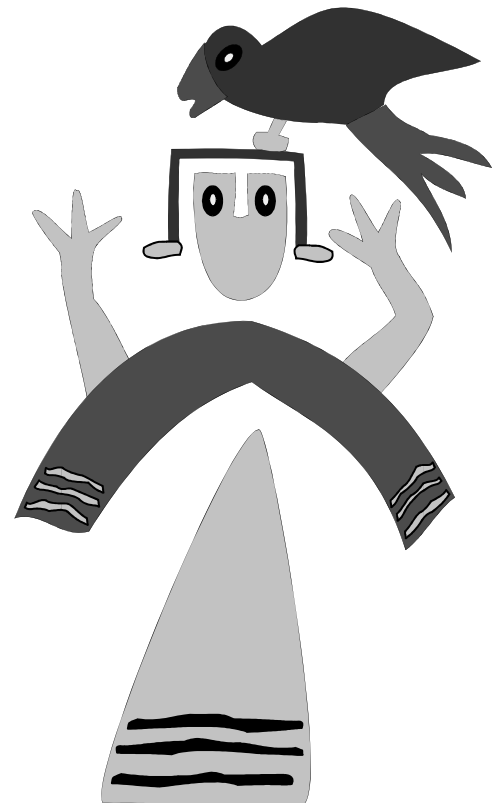
Brainstorming is a *divergent thinking process* that encourages us to *broaden* our range of thinking and ideas. In other words, brainstorming is a creative thinking technique in which we take a question or issue of concern and explore its possibilities. For example, we might ask, “What could make our PST more participatory?”

To help us establish a good climate for creativity, we need to follow four rules when brainstorming:

- 1. No judging of ideas.** Not judging or evaluating ideas for a certain period of time allows us to form new connections and perspectives on the ideas put forth. Withholding judgment and comment also encourages us to let our ideas flow more freely.
- 2. Quantity of ideas is important.** The more ideas we have, the better the chance that we will have some good ones!
- 3. Adding on to others’ ideas is encouraged (as in “piggybacking”).** Sometimes we make an association from another’s idea that enables us to refine or even go off in a different direction.
- 4. Crazy, unusual, or creative ideas are encouraged.** It is often through the unusual that we eventually come up with an idea that works (the solution we had been seeking but didn’t know it).

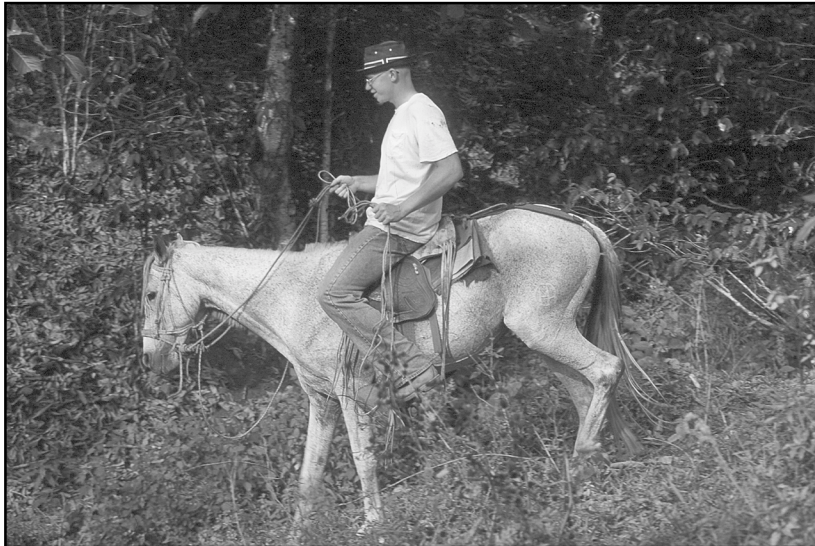
Once we have finished the brainstorming activity, we still need to analyze and judge the ideas on our list and develop them into viable alternatives for group decision making. Begin this process by helping the group

- Eliminate duplicate ideas;
- Cluster ideas under various themes or topics; and
- Come up with a list of ideas to examine, explore, and develop further.



Listing is a *convergent thinking process* where the group is trying to *recall or research a limited set of responses*. For example, if the group wanted to determine how many organizations in a given district provide maternal and child health care services, it would use a listing process. There are a specific number of organizations providing such a service. On the other hand, if the group wanted to determine how to encourage new mothers to use available services, the group would use a brainstorming process. There could be a multitude of creative ways to interest mothers, not a limited set of approaches.

[Adapted with permission from ***Facilitation Skills: An Introductory Guide***, pp. 93-95, by Dian Seslar Svendsen and Rolf Sartorius. Social Impact and Project Concern, Reston, VA. 1997.]



“When elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers.”

— Proverb of the Kikuyu people of East Africa

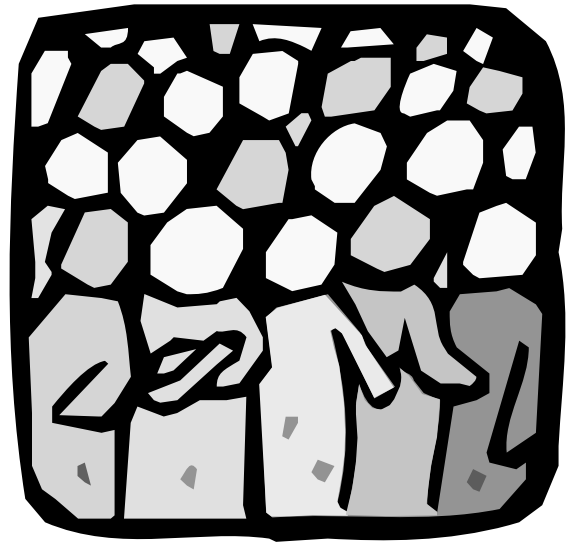


DECISIONS BY CONSENSUS

Consensus decision making involves a deep exploration of the issue(s) and the possible options or solutions. **Consensus occurs when all members of a team are committed to the decision and believe that it is the best agreement or choice they can make collectively.** It does not necessarily mean that everyone agrees 100 percent with the decision, but it means they can support it and do not feel they are compromising their ethics, values, or interests in doing so.

If the consensus process is managed well, people generally feel a high degree of satisfaction about it and a commitment to the decision. That said, people often overuse consensus. Since it requires significant time and energy, consensus should be used in situations where there is a high need for commitment from everyone for the decision or action to be a success. Generally speaking, consensus works best when:

- the group has clear authority to make and implement the decision
- time for discussion is plentiful
- the need for buy-in is high
- quality of the decision must be high
- the possibility for consensus is present
- expertise on the topic exists among group members (or may be tapped from an accessible resource person)
- the amount of division on the issue is not so high that it makes consensus impossible
- working relationships in the group make discussion, creativity, and flexibility possible
- the group is focused on a shared goal that can help individuals rise above differences



As you get more and more involved with groups in your community, you will notice many opportunities for consensus building. One example would be a case in which the local community wants to establish a parent-teacher association. The parents and teachers want to reach agreement—consensus—on their main goals and respective roles and responsibilities in the new partnership. The association will only work if both groups feel committed and do their part. The school principal has already said he will support whatever the group determines its best plan to be.



Whenever you are co-facilitating a consensus-building discussion, **remain as neutral as possible and try not to influence the group one particular way or another.** Be aware of your own biases about the issues or certain people in the group so you can adjust for them. Also, **ensure that all members get equal opportunity to ask questions, voice concerns, or offer alternative suggestions.** Use round robin or other techniques that will facilitate individual contributions. If cultural norms prevent direct participation by some community groups, consider holding discussions in smaller separate groups (such as women-men, youth-adult, and others) and then using an alternative ranking method to reach final decisions.

[Adapted with permission from: "Facilitating for Consensus" by James A. McCaffrey, in *Facilitation Skills for Trainers, Facilitators, and Group Leaders, Volume II*, Training Resources Group, Inc. Alexandria, VA.]



*A good friend is one who tells
you your faults in private.*

— Anonymous



PLANNING AND FACILITATING MEETINGS

Facilitating group meetings in a culture different from your own is tricky, as how people behave may have entirely different meanings than you expect. In the U.S., if some group members are silent, people may assume they are shy, or that they don't have any ideas or strong feelings about the subject, or that they feel intimidated by other group members (including the facilitator). But in some cultures, the highest status individuals may be the quietest, showing their wisdom and respect for others by their ability to reflect and hold back the first idea that comes to mind.

Setting an agenda, dealing with disruptions, keeping the group on task, and reaching consensus all are culturally based behaviors. Expecting groups in your host country to act like Americans can be frustrating and counterproductive.



Before attempting to co-facilitate a meeting with a local group, use your cross-cultural skills and your ability to observe and ask discreet questions to understand group behavior in your host country. Go to local meetings and/or work alongside a local group. Observe and then discuss your observations with trainers, peers, Counterparts, and/or friends. Look for some of the following:

- What formalities are observed? Who opens and closes the meeting, and how?
- Where do people of different status sit? (Consider age, gender, politics, ethnic group, and so on.)
- How are topics introduced? By going straight to the point? By careful indirection?
- Which topics are introduced first? (In some cultures, the most important ones are saved for last.)
- What seemingly irrelevant topics are introduced? Are they really irrelevant?
- How do people get permission or find an opening to speak? Are there people who have no voice?
- How long does it typically take the group to decide on something? What is the process for coming to a decision?
- How do people express their dissatisfaction with another group member? By quiet ostracism? By pointing out the behavior directly?
- What kinds of decisions are made *outside* the meeting? Where and how are they made? By whom?
- How are decisions or other data recorded and kept?
- [Add your own questions]



Once you feel ready to take on the responsibility of organizing a meeting, invite your Counterpart or one of the group leaders to co-facilitate with you. Ask your co-facilitator to help you adapt the guidelines below to make them acceptable and compatible to local norms. (If you are in PST, practice co-facilitating meetings with your training group before doing it in the host community.)

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

PREPARATION (WITH YOUR CO-FACILITATOR)

- Clarify the purpose of the meeting. (What is the overall goal or reason for bringing these people together?)
- Determine who should attend the meeting. Check the list again after you've developed the agenda.
- Develop the agenda. (Gather suggestions or pertinent information from others, as necessary.)
- Prioritize the agenda. (Sometimes it is better to start with an item you can easily get agreement on to get the group in a positive frame of mind before you tackle the tough issues.)
- Organize the agenda in terms of:
 - **What** the issue is
 - **Who** has responsibility for leading the discussion of each issue
 - **How much time** is allocated for each issue
 - **What outcome** is expected in relation to each issue (e.g., a decision, common information, list of options, recommendations)
- Identify and announce, with lead time, any pre-work that needs to be done by people attending.
- Let all attendees know the time, place, and duration of the meeting in writing or by other means appropriate to your group. Clarify any special roles you may want them to assume during the meeting.
- Discuss with your co-facilitator how you will share the responsibilities of the meeting.



RUNNING THE MEETING (WITH YOUR CO-FACILITATOR)

- Start the meeting on time (whatever “on time” might mean in your host culture).
- State the purpose of the meeting.
- Present the agenda and adjust if necessary.
- Introduce any visitors and explain why they have been invited.
- Manage the process of the meeting:
 - Keep people on track.
 - Work from the agenda.

- Ensure that participants feel comfortable about their opportunity to speak and contribute ideas and opinions.
 - Check with the group to see that each item has been completed.
 - Manage the time spent on each item.
 - Deal effectively with interfering or overbearing group members.
 - Keep notes on newsprint or blackboard if possible. (A visible record helps the group focus on the task, eliminate repetition, produce clarity, and review complete notes for analysis and decisionmaking.)
- Review the action items that were generated in the meeting before adjourning.
 - Critique the *process* of the meeting:
 - How well did the meeting go?
 - How well did we work together?
 - What could be done to improve the next meeting?
 - If the leadership is being rotated, identify the leader for the next meeting.
 - Decide and confirm the date, time, and location of the next meeting.
 - Thank participants and adjourn the meeting on time. (Ending ahead of time is great, too!)



FOLLOW-UP (WITH YOUR CO-FACILITATOR)

- Prepare and distribute the minutes of the meeting within a few days' time.
- Be sure that anyone who missed the meeting is informed of decisions or actions taken that will affect them or issues that they will be responsible for handling at the next meeting.
- Take a deep breath and start the process all over again!

ROTATING ROLES IN MEETING MANAGEMENT

If you are going to be conducting regular meetings with the same group of people, you can encourage leadership and share responsibility by using a management technique called rotating roles. In rotating roles, you select or ask four people to volunteer for the roles of facilitator, timekeeper, recorder, and process observer for each meeting. At the end of every meeting, four more people sign up to perform these same roles the next time. Group members continue rotating through the roles and, over time, polish their skills in meeting management. Briefly, the roles are:

Facilitator: The facilitator basically runs the meeting by working through all of items on the agenda as productively and efficiently as possible. The facilitator keeps the group focused, ensures everyone's participation, and manages people's "airtime." [You and your Counterpart can work one-on-one with the facilitator ahead of time to make sure she or he feels prepared and comfortable in the role and understands the agenda and desired outcomes.]





Timekeeper: The timekeeper acts as an alarm clock, not as a judge. If a given agenda item needs more time, the facilitator will negotiate that with the group. If the group decides to allocate additional time, the timekeeper “resets the clock” as necessary. The timekeeper pays special attention to the end of the meeting and reminds the group to save time for the process observer’s report.

Recorder: The recorder’s job is to write down the group’s ideas and information as generated so everybody can see it and read it. Before the meeting, the recorder makes sure flip charts, markers, and other needed supplies are in place. As necessary, the recorder clarifies what she/he heard from the various group members (e.g., “Dave, have I got what you said?” or “Could you repeat that, Leticia, I missed part of it.”).

Process Observer: The process observer watches (like a camera, without judgment) how the members work together and how the facilitator, recorder, and timekeeper perform in their respective roles. At the end of the meeting, the observer shares key insights with the group. (This role should be adjusted to conform to the interpersonal communication norms in your host culture.)

*“If your only tool is a hammer,
pretty soon all the world appears to be a nail.”*

— Mark Twain



STORIES FROM THE FIELD:

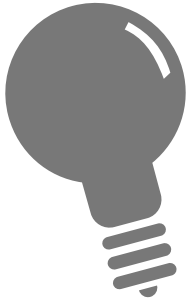
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

[In the following paragraph, a Volunteer describes her experience of helping the community apply for a small project grant.]

I would arrive with my portable typewriter and sit, sometimes for hours, on the ground, in the middle of the village waiting for someone to tell me what to write. It is funny when I think back on it; they must have thought I was crazy. But one day, Joseph, a village member who had been very quiet up until now, handed me a piece of paper. Written in almost perfect English was the completed proposal. I was floored. It proved to me again that you get what you expect from people. I expected them to write the proposal, and they did.

*[From **Above and Beyond: Secondary Activities for Peace Corps Volunteers**, p. 17. (ICE M0052)]*





IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES FOR PRACTICING YOUR ROLE AS A CO-FACILITATOR

PRACTICE FACILITATING DISCUSSIONS

PURPOSE

Facilitation is a performing art and a skill. The more you perform and practice the skills of asking questions, listening, paraphrasing, and summarizing, the more helpful you will be to the groups with whom you work.

ACTIVITY

If you are in PST, you can do this activity in technical, cross-cultural, or intermediate/advanced language groupings. If you are already at your site, you can practice with small groups of community members, including young people. The activity requires six or more people; large groups may be divided into subgroups of approximately six people each.

1. Read the handouts “Facilitating Group Discussion” and “Working with Difficult Group Members” in the Useful Concepts section of this Toolkit.
2. Designate one person in each group to act as the facilitator, another person as the observer, and the remaining people as group members.
3. Select a topic that is of considerable interest to members of the group—the more controversial, the better. The person who is in the facilitator role leads the group in a 20-minute discussion about the chosen topic. The facilitator tries to practice asking questions, paraphrasing, summarizing, and so on, to the extent possible. The observer watches and makes note of examples of effective and less-effective facilitative behaviors. If some of the group members exhibit “difficult” behaviors such as controlling or holding side conversations, the facilitator tries to diminish or deal appropriately with these.



4. After the discussion, the observer offers examples of helpful and less-helpful facilitation behaviors he or she saw. The group briefly processes the experience and makes suggestions for how to improve the facilitator's performance.
5. Depending on the time available, repeat the activity with different people playing the roles of facilitator, group members, and observer. Try to apply the lessons learned during the first round.



“Lead from the back of the room.”

— Anonymous

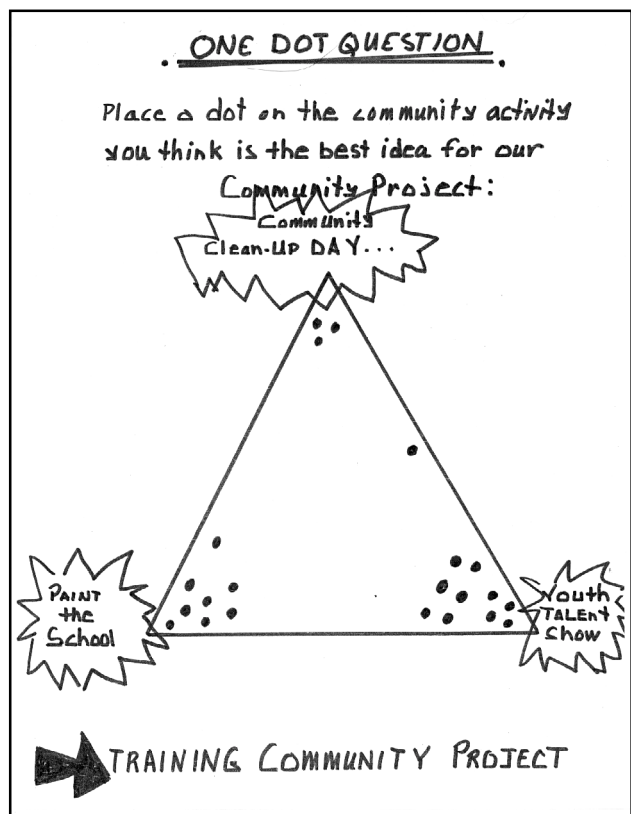




USING "DECISION DOTS"

PURPOSE

Paper dots are a helpful tool for facilitating decision making in groups. Basically, people use the dots to visually express their opinions or vote on a particular issue or alternative. The dots allow everyone to have a say in the outcome and the visualization of the group's viewpoint can have a powerful, even galvanizing effect on the process. Three of the most common ways in which decision dots are used are to (a) summarize quickly the convergence or divergence of opinion or viewpoint about a specific issue, (b) select the most important issues felt by participants, and (c) make a choice between different alternatives.



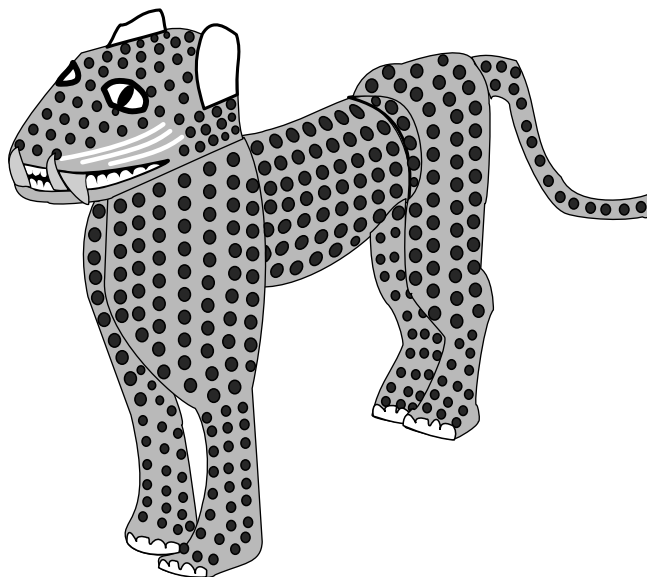
ACTIVITY

You can practice with decision dots in almost any setting where you have a group of people who need to discuss and come to agreement on something. For example, you can discuss a cross-cultural issue in your language class and use the dots to help you see where people stand on the issue or what solutions they would opt for if problem solving is the goal. In a PST or IST technical session, you can use decision dots for deciding which discussion topics are of highest priority for the agenda and so forth. Try them out as follows:

- 1.** First, make the dots. The classic way is to cut them out of paper and have tape or glue handy for attaching them to flip chart paper (as illustrated in the photo above). If you are working in a rural environment, you may want to experiment with beans, seeds, or other small objects that can be stuck or laid onto another surface. The other option is to have people simply draw dots directly on the flip chart paper where you have the issues or alternatives listed.
- 2.** Practice the single-dot question. Single-dot questions allow group members to express their viewpoint immediately by putting a colored dot on a scale, range, or matrix that allows different options. This is used to decide on the next step of a group process, to get over an impasse in discussion, to discuss the feeling of the session or the day, or to evaluate group process. Each person gets one dot to place, either openly or in private (depending on the issue and the group composition). The facilitator makes no initial judgment, but leads the group in an interpretation of the results of the voting.
- 3.** Practice the multi-dot question. In this version, everyone has a chance to put several dots to indicate his or her priorities on a selected number of issues or alternatives. This is a good method when there are several alternatives (10 to 20 for example) and a selection or a prioritization is useful. The number of dots for each participant depends on the number of participants and the number of items (alternatives, issues to prioritize, etc.). For example, if there are 15 alternatives to choose from and 20 participants, only two or three dots per person should be distributed. Once the dots are placed, count them, and then put the alternatives in numerical sequence to prioritize. Don't be too rigid—even after counting the dots, let the group discuss and evaluate the priorities.

For more information about the use of dots and other visual decision-making and planning tools, see the VIPP manual referenced below.

[Adapted with permission from *VIPP-Visualization in Participatory Programmes*, UNICEF Bangladesh, 1993. (ICE: TR124)]





USING SNOW CARDS (SNOW = SMALL NOTES ON WALL)

PURPOSE

Snow cards are simply small white cards that participants use to write down an idea and post it on the wall. Using snow cards encourages active participation in discussion and helps the group organize the information it has generated. For example, a group might brainstorm all the possible ways to raise community members' environmental awareness. Group members list their ideas on snow cards—one idea per card—and then cluster the cards into logical categories for further consideration. The cards may also be moved around to illustrate sequencing or processes (that is, formed into a flowchart).

ACTIVITY

Experiment with snow cards in your training environment.

For example—

- In a technical session where you and your group are exploring all the factors that affect a particular situation, use snow cards to list and organize the information to show cause-effect relationships.
- Use snow cards to list and sequence the daily activities of women, men, girls, and boys in your host community. Show the cards to your host family members and ask them to help you put them in order and identify activities you may have missed. Use the cards to engage them in dialogue.
- Use the cards for any type of brainstorm activity where you need to generate ideas and then do something with the list.





PRACTICING PROBLEM-SOLVING TECHNIQUES

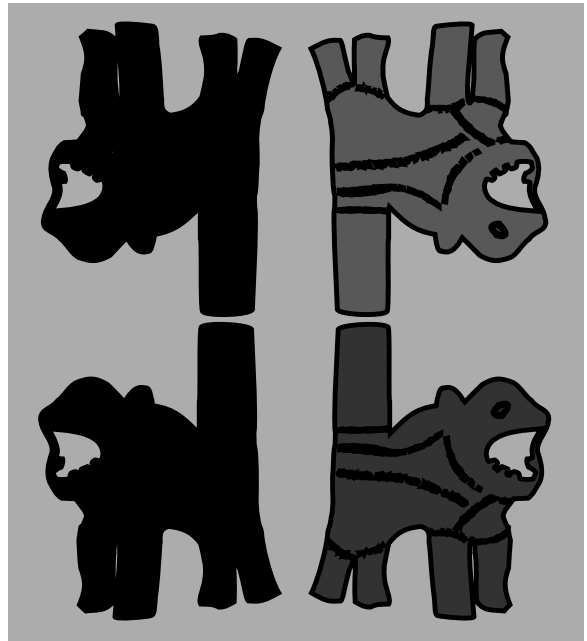
PURPOSE

To gain experience with the different techniques that facilitators can use to help a group identify and solve problems or address important issues. To learn to select techniques that are appropriate to the different steps in the problem-solving process.

ACTIVITY

Problem solving is best if practiced on real issues and there is usually no shortage of these during PST! The issue may be related to cultural differences, intensity of workload, progress in language learning, ambiguity about technical role assignment, and so on. When you and your colleagues and trainers need to address a problem, try out some of the techniques suggested in the reading “Solving Problems and Making Decisions in Groups” (pp. 23–25 of this Toolkit). Pay particular attention to selecting techniques that are appropriate to each step in the process. For example, use brainstorming only after you are sure you understand the problem.

After you experiment with the steps and methods in problem solving, take a few minutes to critique how well you and your group managed the process. Suggest ways to improve it the next time.





REACHING CONSENSUS IN A GROUP — A VALUES CLARIFICATION EXERCISE

PURPOSE

Before jumping into *facilitating* consensus with community groups, it's helpful to experience and practice the process as a participant (i.e., as a group member). Consensus building is a lifelong skill that will serve any person well.

ACTIVITY

You will need a group of five people or more to do this activity. If the group is large, divide into subgroups of five to seven. It is helpful to assign one person in the group to serve as the “observer” and offer insights at the end of the discussion.

1. As preparation for the activity, review “Understanding Group Process” (pp. 8–9) and “Decisions by Consensus” (pp. 29–30) in this Toolkit.
2. Read the values clarification situation presented on the next page and follow the instructions for the self-ranking and group consensus exercise. Take about 30 minutes to reach agreement as a group.
3. Afterwards, ask the observer of your group for feedback on how well you worked together to push toward consensus. As a group discuss these questions:
 - What were some examples of “task” and “maintenance” roles played by various group members?
 - How did people try to influence others? How would you characterize the leadership in the group?
 - Was consensus reached? If yes, what happened during the discussion that facilitated it? What hindered it?
 - What other types of decisions were made en route to the overall goal of reaching consensus?

NOTE: *If the group already has a controversy or challenge to discuss and get agreement or resolution on, by all means use that topic rather than the values clarification suggested here. However, in this case it is particularly important to have at least one or two people step back and serve as observers of the process. Make sure you process the consensus-building experience by asking yourselves some of the questions listed above in item 3.*



VALUES CLARIFICATION EXERCISE

A multimillion-dollar highway project is to begin in a densely populated area and will pass through a number of existing features. The Ministry of Transport has approved retention of only five features. The rest will have to be demolished to give way to the coming project.

You have been assigned chairperson of the committee to decide which features are to stay. Which 5 of the following features will you retain? Please rank them in order of priority.

- A high school with a very good reputation.
- A public secondary school with 3,000 students.
- A private elementary school.
- An exclusive sports club of high-ranking officials.
- A 1,000-year-old mosque.
- A commercial bank earning more than 20 million dollars for the government per year.
- A public marketplace for good quality foods and other household materials having about 300 market vendors.
- The only beautifully maintained public park.
- A zoo with many rare species of animals.
- The only fire station.
- A building complex owned by your parents with the value of 5 million dollars.
- A textile industry providing jobs for more than 4000 workers.
- The only 500-year-old church in the country.
- A five-star hotel with an international reputation.
- A new hospital built with foreign collaboration having a 400-bed capacity and modern technology for surgery.
- A well-known state university that is your alma mater as well as the present Prime Minister's.
- The only cancer hospital of the country.
- The parliament.
- The complex of the Ministry of Transport.

After ranking them individually, discuss among the members of your group and decide which five features you will finally retain, based on the consensus of your group. No voting is allowed.

[Adapted with permission from *VIPP-Visualization in Participatory Programmes*, UNICEF Bangladesh, 1993. (ICE TR124)]

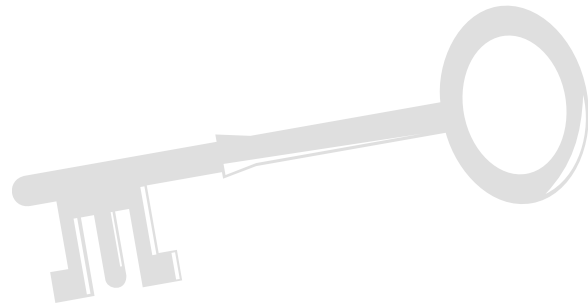


25 QUESTIONS ABOUT GROUP FACILITATION

Here is a list of questions developed by participants in a “training of facilitators workshop.” Change or add to the list as you like. Pose the questions to other Trainees, Volunteers, Counterparts, trainers, and/or community members. Use them as a means to explore, reflect, and think critically about the art of facilitation. Keep in mind that there are no single “right” answers to any of these questions.

1. How can you manage the process when the facilitator has a strong view?
2. How can you deal with two group members who argue?
3. How do you handle two or three people in the group who always seem to have a different agenda than the rest of the group?
4. What can you do to get the group to take over the leadership (over time)?
5. How do you resolve a conflict when the facilitator has trouble being objective?
6. How can you plan effective meetings?
7. How can you communicate technical information when you’re supposed to be facilitating?
8. How do you manage a blocker?
9. How do you identify internal (hidden) stress among group members?
10. How do you size up group dynamics and change original plans?
11. How can you deal with a stonewall group?
12. How can you set up expectations to maximize goals and objectives?
13. How should you facilitate when you are knowledgeable versus when you are not? What are the differences?
14. How do you negotiate ground rules and/or contracts?
15. How do you handle it when one or more participants challenge the facilitator’s credibility?
16. How can you keep a group on topic?
17. How do you know when you’re done?
18. What powers do facilitators have? What is the proper use of those powers?
19. How can you deal with cliques among group members?
20. If the facilitator knows the solution will not work, what should he or she do?
21. What special things might be done when facilitating groups with cultural diversity?
22. How do you determine the kind of help needed by a group?
23. How do you handle it when the group’s leader(s) seem to want one thing and the members want something else?
24. What do you do if a meeting is called and only two or three people show up?
25. How do you know, as a facilitator, if you are doing a good job?

[Adapted with permission from *Facilitating Community and Decision-Making Groups*, p. 85, by Allen B. Moore and James A. Feldt, Krieger Publishing Co., Melbourne, FL. 1993. (ICE TR113)]



KEY RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION AND INSIGHT

The Art of Facilitation: How to Create Group Synergy. Dale Hunter, Anne Bailey, and Bill Taylor. (Fisher Books, Cambridge, MA) 1995. [ICE TR114]

Choose a Future: Issues and Options for Adolescent Girls. (CEDPA Publications, Washington, DC) 1996. [ICE WD127]

Facilitating Community and Decision-Making Groups. Allen B. Moore and James A. Feldt. (Kreiger Publishing Co., Melbourne, FL) 1993. [ICE TR113]

Navamanga: Training Activities for Group Building, Health, and Income Generation. Dian Selsar Svendsen and Sujatha Wijetilleke. (OEF International/UNIFEM, New York, NY) 1986. [Reprinted by ICE WD006]

Nonformal Education Training Manual. Helen Fox. (Peace Corps, Washington, DC) 1989. [ICE M0042]

PACA: Participatory Analysis for Community Action. (Peace Corps, Washington, DC) 1996. [ICE M0053]

Power, Process, and Participation — Tools for Change. Edited by Rachel Slocum, Lori Wichhart, Dianne Rocheleau, and Barbara Thomas-Slayter. (Intermediate Technologies, London, England) 1995. [ICE TR108]

Resolution and Conflict Management in Nonprofit Organizations: The Leader's Guide to Finding Constructive Solutions. (Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, St. Paul, MN) 1999. [ICE TR118]

What Did You Say? The Art of Giving and Receiving Feedback. Charles N. Seashore, Edith Whitfield Seashore, and Gerald M. Weinberg. (Bingham House Books, Columbia, MD) 1997. [ICE TR115]

VIPP — Visualization in Participatory Programmes. (UNICEF, New York, NY) 1993. [ICE TR124]



NOTES





