
3 April 2014

Dear Friends,

This week's Newsflash focuses on participation in development. We know that participation, especially from the local community, is critical to the success of development projects. However, it can be challenging to do this well. The resources included provide some insight into how to structure participation to be effective.

This is an area we're interested in learning more about. If you have had successes or challenges in community mobilization or participatory development please share with us!

We hope you enjoy this week's edition of the Newsflash!

Sincerely,

The Firelight Team

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(Resource) Facilitating workshops for the co-generation of knowledge: 21 tips

Source: Participatory Methods, Author: Robert Chambers

This blog post is based on Robert Chambers book *Participatory Workshops: A sourcebook of 21 sets of ideas and activities*.

Most of the tips can apply to all types of workshops for learning and sharing. The tips are organized into three sections: planning and preparation, the workshop, and follow-up and actions.

Here are some Highlights from the blog

Planning and Preparation

Tip #1. Reflect on the "why?" and the "so what?" of the workshop

What sort of workshop is it? What sorts of knowledges are you hoping will be shared, learnt about and co-generated? Who might co-convene and co-facilitate? Who has what – including creativity – to share? Who can contribute to the content of the workshop and to its process and culture? Who needs to meet whom? How will participants benefit? What outputs, follow-up and impact might the workshop have? Who will any outputs be for? Who will be able and willing to follow up at once in preparing, disseminating and further developing outputs?

Tip #6. Plan, but do not overplan

Distinguish fixed points from open time. Fixed points may be the start, and opening if there has to be one; the end, and closing if there has to be one; field visits; and shopping or tourist time off. From these fixed points, plan backwards with cards on the floor. List topics and activities on cards. Start with how you intend to end. Then continue planning backwards inserting and moving the cards around. Recognise rhythm and anticipate low points – usually at or just over half time – Wednesday afternoon in a five-weekday workshop. Wednesday is a good day for a field trip, or an afternoon off, or doing something different.

The Workshop

Tip #15. Brainstorm to create the agenda.

This applies mainly with smaller workshops, with numbers of, say 10–50. A concept note, or a sense of common purpose, and a framework of timings may already exist. The agenda can evolve through all participants brainstorming and/or individually writing on cards which are then sorted on the ground into emergent categories. These can then be discussed and agreed. The clustered cards can then provide the basis for plenary or group activities. In several cases, they have also provided the structure for a final output. Brainstorming to decide how to handle the emergent topics can lead to a variety of solutions – some in plenary, some in groups with feedback to plenary, some deferred. In a PRA sharing workshop in Pakistan, for example, seven topics coalesced. Three were crosscutting. So four groups were formed, and each included in their agenda each of the three that crosscut.

Tip #18. Use Participatory PowerPoint

Paradoxically, Participatory Power Point (PPP) is a brilliant, powerful and quick way of achieving agreement and consensus on a text. A fast and accurate typist familiar with the topic sits and writes, with the text appearing on a screen for all to see. The text can be composed jointly or – usually better and faster – a draft is written which is then modified. Proposed changes can be entered in italics, and then changed to normal when there is agreement. If there is a serious debate or a deep disagreement, text can be abandoned, or a small group can be delegated to go off and hammer out a revision and bring it back. Without PPP we could never have achieved the Lusaka Declaration or the Bamako Consensus.

Follow-up and Actions

Tip #19. Think in advance about follow-up and seek agreement on actions

Follow-up needs to be planned for, but announcing it up front may be undermining. Ideally, ideas and commitments emerge from the participatory process and come individually and collectively from participants. Far too often, follow-up is lacking. Either it is promised and does not happen, or in the conditions of the end of a workshop – particularly if there is a formal closing – it is simply squeezed out by lack of time. There was good follow-up from the first Nainital CLTS workshop, with a one-page statement agreed by the workshop, a four-page summary written the day after the workshop, and a large follow-up meeting of about 70 people in Delhi about three weeks later. Follow up on text can involve time-consuming editing and iterations with the draft notes. Plan ahead and agree that someone will have the time.

Tip #20. Ensure short prompt summaries of workshops

It is widely considered good practice to have a detailed record of a workshop. If this is succinct, out in a matter of days, and widely distributed, it can be useful and multiply impact. But far too often laborious notes are taken, for example by a student who is not familiar with the subject, and then written up none too well, and much too long – a lead balloon that sinks without trace, read by no one except those who want to be sure they are mentioned. A short, punchy summary of main points has more impact. Pre-plan for this. Have time after a workshop ring-fenced for it. It is the summary that will receive the most attention, while at the same time pointing to the topics in the main text which can be consulted.

To read the full blog post, please visit: <http://bit.ly/1l8gcJx>

(Resource) Storytelling in Development Practice

Source: Institute of Development Studies, Author: Hamsini Ravi

Stories are a powerful, yet underrated medium. Humans are socialised through the myriad of stories, bonds are created, history is relived and lessons are learnt through stories. The non-profit sector is a treasure chest of humbling and powerful stories of men and women, seeking and braving change. Stories have the magical power to liven up a 500-page annual report that no one wants to read; they can foster a shared organisational spirit in a room full of people working in different contexts and capacities; as well as lend depth and meaning to an evaluation study.

In the context of a development organisation, stories and storytelling can be used in:

- Research
- Monitoring & Evaluation (M & E)
- Communications/ Advocacy
- Organisational learning.

Research

Storytelling works wonderfully well in research studies and investigations, and can be an effective prompt, when asking people about personal moments in their lives. It also enables the storyteller, as well as the listener, to be reflexive about the topic in consideration. For a researcher, it can help unpack their positionality in the research process and allow them to confront and work on their biases upfront. As a research tool, stories are accessible, account for cultural diversity and require no reading or writing skills. As useful as this may seem, there are some ethical considerations, viz, ownership, use of data, confidentiality, placing the story in its respective cultural context. These can be navigated by acquiring informed consent, and constantly reflection on use and interpretation of other's stories by the researcher.

Monitoring and Evaluation

As a tool used in M & E, storytelling can challenge our linear thought processes, giving space for non-linear relationships in interventions. They enable a more holistic understanding of people's lives, dismissing the categories that funding and donor agencies tend to box beneficiaries into. The politics of using storytelling in monitoring and evaluation of development projects is that the evaluator may not always hear the things he/ she wants to hear. It is therefore necessary to constantly negotiate expectations of community reviews with the donor.

Advocacy and Communications

In advocacy and communications, stories can make up the oft-missing emotional link. It can also inform funders of realities on the ground and be used in promoting inter-cultural communication and understanding. While, a proportion of non-profits do use stories in their marketing and advocacy collaterals, it is apparent that this is often plagued with issues of manipulation, representation and dissemination. Stories could be tweaked and exaggerated to suit the needs of the organisation, and these issues can be overcome by strengthening consent processes and quality checks.

Organisational learning

Organisational change and learning can involve a healthy dose of stories and storytelling. From organising sharing sessions to using stories in induction programmes to integrating divisions within an organisation, there are a multitude of possibilities. For instance, each division of the organisation could narrate the intricacies of their project through a story to the marketing division to foster better understand.

While tapping into the collective processes of sharing and telling, storytelling can make the development sector as a whole more reflective in its approach and policies. It can bridge geographical and hierarchical divides and highlight the more humane elements of our work

and personalities. Can we take this as a personal challenge to incorporate more stories in our work as development professionals?

Hamsini Ravi is an MA Development Studies student at IDS.

To read more from IDS, please visit: <http://bit.ly/1jTcyS6>

(Call for Proposals) Human Dignity Foundation Call for Proposals in Child Protection for NGOs in South Africa

The Switzerland-based Human Dignity Foundation (HDF) has announced a call for proposals on child protection for NGOs in India and South Africa to apply for support for projects that will contribute to ensuring that 'all children are safer at home and in the community.

The primary target group of the call is children between 10 and 18 years

The geographic focus of the call is South Africa and India (Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh and cities of Delhi and Bangalore only).

Key areas of focus are:

- Effective support to children who experience violence
- Prevention of violence against children
- Prevention of unnecessary separation of children

HDF is particularly interested in projects that:

- Address underlying causes of violence against children
- Support functioning of integrated protection systems
- Support families and communities to better care for children
- Support removal of drivers of institutional care

Applications are invited from non-government, not-for-profit organisations registered in the countries of focus. We are looking for organisations that have a proven track record and are providing effective solutions that put children directly at the core of their activities.

Applicants are invited to submit Concept Notes by 5pm GMT on **18th of April 2014**. To apply, go to: <http://bit.ly/1pCJ72>

(Call for Proposals) Three Grantmaking Foundations that fund Children's Projects around the world

Source: FundsforNGOs

This guide provides information on three of the leading donors to children's projects around the world. If you're an NGO looking for new funding to support young people in your country, this guide is for you. We'll discuss some of the some of the biggest donors in the field and how your organisation can apply for support.

The Micheal and Susan Dell Foundation

Inspired by their passion for children and by a shared desire to improve the lives of children living in urbanpoverty, Michael and Susan Dell established their Austin, Texas-based foundation in 1999. In its early years, the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation focused its efforts on improving education and children's health in Central Texas. But within a few short years, their reach expanded, first nationally and then globally. To date, the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation has committed more than \$925million to assist nonprofit organizations working in major urban communities in the United States, South Africa and India.

The Foundation focuses on opportunities with the greatest potential to directly and measurably transform the lifelong outcomes of impoverished urban children around the globe. It operates three major funding programs in Urban Education, Childhood Health, and Family Economic Stability. The Foundation has no geographic restrictions on its grand funding meaning that qualifying organisations from every country can apply. Applications are accepted all year round. For more information and to apply go here: <http://msdf.co/1l8gkIP>

Child Health Foundation

The Child Health Foundation was established in 1985 as a non-profit, public charity to prevent and treat life-threatening communicable diseases of infants and children in the United States and abroad. The Foundation's mission is "to save the greatest number of children's lives at the lowest possible cost." The Child Health Foundation operate independently, seeking and promoting more effective, easily-delivered and less-expensive methods to prevent illness and death of children, such as oral rehydration therapy to prevent dehydration, immunizations, and breastfeeding.

The organisation's programs focus on three core areas: Research, Professional Medical Education and Outreach, and Public Education. Recently funded projects supported by the Foundation include a scheme to in Tanzania to make clay pots to protect water from contamination; Improving personal hygiene in the community in India; and establishing rain harvesters at schools in Uganda. If you have a child focused health project that you want to develop then you can contact the Child Health Foundation by going here: <http://bit.ly/1jaMtQb>

The Global Fund for Children

The Global Fund for Children aims to transform the lives of children on the edges of society—trafficked children, refugees, child laborers—and help them regain their rights and pursue their dreams. Since 1997, the Fund has reached 8 million children worldwide. Global Fund for Children invests in grassroots organizations that enable the most vulnerable children in their communities to thrive. Strategic support helps grantees achieve their vision, become sustainable, and reach even more children in need.

Last year the Global Fund for Children reached 1 million children and aim to reach 10 million by 2015. The Fund's work has transformed children's lives around the world with thousands of children going to school instead of to work. Thousands more are protecting themselves from HIV, escaping the bonds of slavery, and getting the childhood they deserve.

Since 1997, we have invested \$25.6 million in more than 500 grassroots organizations in 78 countries worldwide. The Fund aims to maximise donors' investment in the developing world.

Grantees of the Fund will have the entrepreneurial vision and passion to transform their communities. They also prefer to collaborate with organisations that can be classed as home-grown, established, innovative, nimble and resourceful. The Global Fund for Children **accepts grant applications all year round**. For more information and to apply go here: <http://bit.ly/1hfkGx7>

As part of the Firelight Foundation's Capacity Building Program, Firelight provides "Newsflashes" to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. Past editions of the Firelight Newsflash can be found on our website:

<http://www.firelightfoundation.org/resources/newsflash>

We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at newsletter@firelightfoundation.org

For more information contact:

Firelight Foundation
740 Front Street, Suite 380
Santa Cruz, CA 95060 USA
www.firelightfoundation.org
+1 831-429- 8750