

# Facilitation and running workshops

**Workshops can be used to analyse problems, develop plans of action, learn new skills, learn from experience, change behaviour and build teams.**

Good facilitation skills maximise the benefits from running workshops, and clear outcomes are essential: *What will be gained from this workshop? Who is it aimed at? Are the objectives relevant to and agreed by key stakeholders?*

In preparing for a workshop you need to consider the following:

Constraints	Administration	Activities
<p>Possible constraints include:</p> <p><b>Time:</b> How much time is needed to practise the skills or resolve the problem, balanced with how much time people have to attend, and costs of the event?</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Which location will maximise participation by enabling all stakeholders to attend (including e.g. beneficiaries, women and minorities)?</p> <p><b>Learning culture:</b> What style of learning are participants used to?</p> <p><b>Language:</b> How to ensure active participation across different languages?</p> <p><b>Resistance or interference:</b> Are any topics contentious? Are permissions needed or is resistance or interference expected?</p>	<p>Good administration is essential for success:</p> <p><b>Venue:</b> right rooms, accommodation, meals, refreshments, equipment</p> <p><b>Participants:</b> publicity, joining instructions, their requirements (<i>transport, meals, accommodation, interpretation, translation, special facilities for disabled</i>), your meeting requirements (<i>instructions, preparation, programme outlines</i>)</p> <p><b>Facilitators and speakers:</b> invitation, transport, materials, payment if appropriate, format of sessions, equipment and resources needed</p> <p><b>Materials:</b> writing materials for participants, printing and collation of handouts etc., registration of participants, evaluation process</p>	<p>Varied and interesting exercises and activities maximise participation.</p> <p><b>Group work:</b> mix sizes, groupings, tasks</p> <p><b>Visual aids and other multi-media resources:</b> increases learning, can overcome language and cultural barriers</p> <p><b>Open-ended questions:</b> <i>why, what, how?</i> encourage wider thinking</p> <p><b>Practising skills or field work:</b> some people learn best from 'doing'. (See '<i>Personal and Professional Development</i>' page)</p> <p><b>Action planning:</b> encourage and capture clear actions following the workshop</p> <p>It is important to choose activities which relate to local context and are designed to support your objectives</p>

## Stages in a Problem Solving Workshop

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. <b>Set the scene</b>      | clarify objectives; introductions; ice breaker                                   |
| 2. <b>Define the problem</b> | what are all the issues and priorities for action? what is already working well? |
| 3. <b>Identify causes</b>    | why are these issues and problems?   |
| 4. <b>Generate solutions</b> | how might you resolve the problem(s)? how can you maximise what is working well? |
| 5. <b>Agree action</b>       | who will do what, by when and how?   |

### Additional resources on All In Diary website:

Facilitating workshops, Seeds for Change 2012  
Active listening, Seeds for Change 2009  
Facilitation tools, Seeds for Change, 2010

### Web links for further information

<http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/RoleofAFacilitator.htm>  
<http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/resources>



### A Facilitator's job is to make it easy

#### A facilitator:

- is objective and neutral
- ensures clear objectives and structure
- manages the time
- keeps an overview and focus on the outcomes
- ensures discussions are relevant
- clarifies everyone's understanding
- ensures actions are agreed and recorded

#### AND

- keeps the event flowing
- listens and observes to ensure everyone is participating
- creates a relaxed atmosphere by setting the scene and ice breakers
- manages the pace, suggesting breaks and allowing time for informal discussion
- encourages participation, creative ideas and individual thinking through use of questions, techniques and exercises