Activity 1: Facilitation Observation Tool

Sometimes learning-by-doing is preceded by learning-by-observing. In this activity you will observe a Facilitator in action. Pay attention to the following nine elements. Rate the facilitator accordingly and write any comments good or bad using Activity Sheet 1. What would you do different. How would you improve the interaction? What, if anything, did you learn?

1. Participation: Those with a stake or an interest in the issue are participating.

2. Facilitator Role: Facilitator is a neutral guide and coaches the process of convening people.

3. Shared Vision: The group has clear goals and vision for action.

4. Effective Processes: Effective methods and processes are used to guide/facilitate the group work.

5. Diversity Utilized: Diverse views are honored, recognized, and utilized, bringing experiences and insights for the greater good of the group.

6. Planning and Feedback: Thorough planning, feedback, and group reflection are used to improve facilitation.

7. Supportive Atmosphere: The atmosphere assumes mutual respect, trust, and self-confidence.

8. Group Progress: The group progresses toward the agreed-upon or renegotiated goals.

9. Learn from Experiences: Participants and facilitator learn from their experiences to build upon their capacities as productive, contributing citizens.

10. Other Comments or Observations that You Have:
**Good Scenario: Food Access Issue**

The local grocery store closed and the citizens are now trying to figure how to create more and better access for food.

1 Facilitator

8 Participants:

Mother on SNAP

Community Development Government Person

Business Man / Entrepreneur

Local Truck Farmer

Average concerned young family citizen

Average concerned Senior Citizen

Local Health Official

Elected Official

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************ VIDEO SCRIPT ************

This is the third meeting for the group to discuss the best method of bringing the community together to work through a facilitated model to address the issue of the local grocery store closing down. Now the nearest source of nutritious affordable food year round is two towns over – almost a forty mile trip each way. Although many of the towns younger, more mobile residents, travel that way each day to work or accesses needed amenities, the towns aging population is far less mobile and finding more and more difficult to find healthy food on a regular basis. There are several food options but none of them provide many of the fresh produce and healthy meats that are recommended by health officials year round. There is a Dollar General and a couple of convenience stores in surrounding towns that offer
processed and boxed foods, so residents have access to starches and other processed carbohydrates at fairly competitive and affordable prices. However fresh produce is only locally available during the growing season when several retired farmers bring their truck farming produce to town and sell it in the town square at what seems to be an ad hoc pop up farmers market. They only sell what is in season and the quality can be good some times and less then premium on other days. Likewise, once the garden quits producing, they have nothing to sell.

Keeping in mind all of these factors, city leaders and local concerned citizens have asked for your help to solve this food access issue. You are confident that the answer lies within the people and the resources that they have access to. So you have set out to meet with the stake holders and organize a community wide facilitated discussion that helps brainstorm and then prioritize the needs and possible solutions to address those needs. This is the third and final meeting before the day of the event which is two weeks away.

Facilitator: Good morning and welcome to this third and final meeting before our big World Café event just two weeks away. I am happy to see you all here. You’ll notice that there are a few new faces in the group this week. As you may recall, at our first couple of meetings, it was noted that we were missing a few key stake holders, so we have invited one of the local truck farmers and an elected official to join us.

So let’s go around the table real quickly and introduce ourselves.

Mother on SNAP: Good morning, I’m ________ a mother to two young daughters. I’ve lived here in town all my life and find it hard to make ends meet. Because of the limited job market I have a hard time finding work and am thankful for any support that I get from the community and the government.

Community Development Government Person: Hello, I’m _________ and I work for the Carlton County Redevelopment Corporation. I would really like to see some of our main street buildings revitalize and community services come back to life.

Business Man / Entrepreneur: Good morning. I’m ______ and I own several of those vacant buildings and would love to see new businesses move in. However, I don’t see that happening as people are moving out of our town and not moving in!

Local Truck Farmer: Howdy folks! Looks like I’m the new kid on the block. My name is ______ and I’ve been farming all my life. I enjoy what I do - - especially when I see how much folks enjoy my fresh produce. I just wish there was more I could do to provide more food for people – Especially our seniors and the kids.

Average concerned young family citizen – Hi folks. I’m ________ . Although I understand you’alls problems, I drive thirty miles to Conway every day and I just do my shopping there on my lunch break or after I get off in the afternoons. I do think it would be nice to have a store here in town for a variety of reasons.
Average concerned Senior Citizen: Hello. I’m __________ and I’m not as young as I used to be. I can’t drive like I once could and I’m having a hard time getting to Conway to get food. Either I have to find a ride or my son brings me groceries once a month when he visits. I suppose I could move, but I’ve lived in my house since I was born in 1938.

Local Health Official: Hi folks. I’m __________ and I work for the Scott County Health Department. Although I realize I may not live in the county, I value your health and know that not eating a healthy diet will dramatically affect your quality of life in the long run. I’m here to help in any way I can.

Elected Official: Hello fellow citizens. I’m Councilman ________________ and I am happy and thankful that you have invited me to this meeting and this effort. I think we have a lot to work on and need to get started.

Facilitator: That’s great! Thank you all for introducing yourselves. We have a very diverse group present and I am confident that we can produce great results. With that in mind, like we all have agreed, we are the convening group that will be host to a series of round table discussions, called World Café, to engage the public in discussions to brainstorm solutions to the problem of healthy food access here in Carter City. This process is not a new one (although it may be new to you). However, it has been used for many years all around the world to address issues just like yours. And if done properly and completely I think you will be pleased with the results and the ensuing action plans that emerge. Do we all agree?

All: Yes……Yes…..we agree…..I agree…..(etc, nodding heads and looking around agreeing..)

Business Owner/Entrepreneur: Well I’m thankful that we have such a diverse group here around the table. I sure would appreciate someone moving into the old grocery store and giving it another go.

Truck Farmer: Me too. I think our community is not going to thrive unless we do something about food.

Elected Official: I agree with both of you, but keep in mind that there are other needs in our community that require attention, so I may not be able to commit as much time and resources as you both would like.

Truck Farmer: I understand. Any support you give us is better than no support though.

All: Agree (shacking heads and nodding in agreement)

Average Concerned Young family Citizen: (Raises hand to be recognized) (Being recognized by the facilitator speaks): I would just like everyone to remember that we may not be able to get a grocery store to move in, but maybe need to think about other ways of either getting food into town, or those needing help out of town to Conway to shop. Just keep an open mind.

All nod in approval…. (some agreeing)
Facilitator: Great – thank you all for being so cooperative and respective of one another's time and level of engagement. Now, in front of you is a pack of handouts that was produced for the meeting. In it, you will find the information about the process and other data and statistics that were requested. I wish to thank (County Health Officials)___________ and (Community Development Government Person)___________ for putting this information together for us. I think you will find this information useful as we move ahead with the planning and ultimately the implementation of the facilitation model.

Mother in SNAP: I realize that I may be the one most holding this group back in terms of finances and need, but I appreciate all that you all are doing to try and bring food to our community. I hope this works!

Average concerned Senior Citizen: Oh sweetie – you’re not holding no one back! You have the same needs as me and we both deserve a decent meal! I’m thankful that the group finally has some direction and that __________(facilitator) is here and leading us in the process. A year ago when we started arguing about “YOU KNOW WHO” wanting to buy the old Thompson place and build a nasty processing plant! I didn’t think this town would ever be able to talk to one another again. These conversations are a breath of fresh air!

Facilitator: Very Good, now let’s turn our attention to.................................

(Scene fades)

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BAD Scenario - Access to Quality Affordable Housing

The housing market crashed and many jobs in Smith Center City left as homeowners went into default and banks began repossessing homes kicking many young families out.

Facilitator: Business Man / Entrepreneur / Landlord

Mother on SNAP / evicted tenant in a rental home

Community Development Government Person

Local Truck Farmer (owns his own home)

Average concerned young family citizen

Average concerned Senior Citizen (would like to downsize to quality assisted living)

Local Health Official (Mental Health and stress of home ownership is very real)

Elected Official

Not in Attendance:

***Banker / Loan Officer

***Builder / Developer

***Grant funder (Has access to Government or private funds that may assist)

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*********************************************************************** Video Script *****************************************************

Access to Quality Affordable Housing. The housing market crashed in 2008 and many jobs in Smith Center City left as homeowners went into default and banks began repossessing homes kicking many young families out. It has been a long slow process and as the economy has seen some growth on the national level. The housing market, un-employment, and other key economic indicators at the local level, specifically Smith Center City, have been stagnant at best, and in some instances slipping the other way. Citizens have been getting together for the past month or so to try and figure out how to push the needle in a positive direction. Today’s discussion will focus on quality affordable housing. Although the housing stock in town has been fairly constant, over the past decade or so, many of the single family homes have been purchased by “investors” and have been turned into rental properties many of them
falling into disrepair as landlords fail to see the need to re-invest profits into upkeep and maintenance. The result is that property values have slowly declined and many, more mobile families wishing for a better life, have moved out only exacerbating this vicious cycle. Keep in mind that the Facilitator is a local business man and owns several properties in town.

Facilitator: Good evening folks. Glad you could all make it to my meeting tonight. As I said in my emails and phone calls to you all, I am worried about what is going on with property values and how young families are moving out of town leaving many houses vacant.

Averaged Concerned Senior Citizen: I don’t really care that much about those younger families. I’m more concerned about my home. I want to sell it and move into Sunny Dale; into one of their assisted living homes. I need top dollar for my place otherwise I won’t be able to afford it. I can’t stay in my place because it’s too big and I can’t keep it up, but I can’t afford to move unless I get half as much more then what the County says my home is worth!

Average Concerned Young Family Citizen: I know you want your price to go up, and I do too, but my taxes are killing me and there is no way I want them to go any higher. If my home value goes up any more, or at least my taxes go up, I don’t know what I’ll do.

Elected Official: I understand what you two are saying, but did you know that taxes are actually going down, at least the city and county portions are. City / County taxes have dropped by five percent over the last three years. You want to complain about higher taxes – take it up with the school board. They’re taking ten percent more of our tax money in the past three years. My money too!

All - that’s crazy.....gasping in amazement.....shaking their heads in shock looking at one another as if they had no idea.

Mother on SNAP – Aw YOU ARE crazy councilman. That can’t be true. My daughters go there and I can tell you that the school is NOT getting any better. Sure, they may be building that fancy new school, but what these kids are learning is NOT anything new or better.

Truck Farmer: Well when I was in school, we didn’t have a fancy new school, but we sure where made to learn. I remember doing all sorts of things both in school and at home. Plus, I had to help my daddy farm and had chores both before school and after. Them old cows didn’t feed or milk themselves you know. Kids today got it way too easy.

Several agreeing...nodding heads...all looking around.

Facilitator: Business Man / Entrepreneur / Landlord: Folks.....folks.......folks.....(trying to calm people down and get them back on task). I understand that there is lots of frustrations about taxes and schools and whatnot, but we’re not here to discuss that, we are here to talk about home values, more specifically, what our community and government needs to do, to make sure that our homes keep their value and new, young families move in and maintain the ones we have.
Local Health Official: Home values are not the real issue...the real problem is the stress of home ownership and the real possibilities of being evicted with no place to go. What we need to worry about is how do we keep these houses affordable for the young families that are trying to raise kids without them succumbing to the stresses of alcoholism and drug addiction just to make it through life.

Community Development Government Worker: Well, if we are going to see any sort of change in the market, we need to have a Banker, and a builder, and maybe even a “Fed” or someone that has access to Federal Grant Programs that help young home buyers purchase their first home at the table. They are missing and seems to me they could be key players in these discussions.

All: Good idea.....he’s right.....some names start getting thrown around.....friend of a friend who is a build.....lots of talking amongst themselves.

Facilitator: Business Man / Entrepreneur / Landlord: Folks.....folks.......folks.....(trying to calm people down and get them back on task). Again - - we are getting off task. I need you all to focus.............

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