



Facilitation

This snapshot explains what facilitation is, how and why we used it and what we learned. Facilitation supports a group to make its own choices in ways that enable individuals to participate and bring the best of themselves to their task¹. To do this, facilitators help a group identify and take responsibility for its purpose and outcomes.

[facilitation]“draws the group back in to the subject matter”
Focus group with GoWell researcher and Panel

How did we use facilitation to agree our purpose?

To facilitate a useful knowledge exchange, we negotiated our ways of working, values and purpose. We reviewed our working agreement during the first few workshops to check what needed to be changed, improved and continued.

How did our facilitation reflect our values and working agreement?

We applied values identified in our working agreement. Some examples include:

Power:



GoWell had responsibility for ensuring it was a safe space for all participants. However, the Panel co-designed the workshops with GoWell. GoWell and the Panel worked as equal partners to ensure that nobody dominated the group and that power to make decisions was shared.

Dialogue:



In our working agreement, the Panel had said that they wanted to listen to and learn from each other and be tolerant of different views. Listening is considered one of many core skills for community engagement because they help facilitate effective communication and relationship-building². Dialogue can be a way of applying these values³. Panel workshop activities aimed to enable everyone to voice their views and seek to understand each other.

Respect:

Respect was part of our working agreement. The above values and techniques are examples of how we put respect into practice.

Social:



Our working agreement also placed an importance on getting to know each other's experiences of regeneration in informal, sociable ways. To put this into practice, the Panel designed visits to each other's neighbourhoods and some visits included participating in activities such as cooking and crafts.

What did we learn?

We found that designing a working agreement with the Panel helped us to select facilitation processes and activities that supported the group to put our values into practice. Designed with the Panel in this collective way, facilitation helped us focus our work on our purpose. Our ways of working became owned by the group and the Panel gradually took on facilitation roles as the workshops progressed.

¹ For more information: www.iaf-world.org/site/facilitators

² Scottish Community Development Centre (2007) *Better Community Engagement: A framework for learning*, Learning Connections, Communities Scotland. Available at: https://www.i-develop-cld.org.uk/pluginfile.php/320/mod_resource/content/1/0055390.pdf

³ Escobar, O. *Public Dialogue and Deliberation A communication perspective for public engagement practitioners*. Edinburgh Beltane, 2011. Available at: www.beltanenetwork.org/resources/beltane-publications/

To get more information and to access the Panel snapshots, go to www.gowellonline.com