

## Activity 4.04 Exploring priorities with World Café (social enterprise)

### Module: 4. Planning Social Action

Duration: 90 Minutes

**Social Development Themes:** Social Enterprise

#### Summary

World café is a way of applying good practice to listening and giving our opinion. It is also a technique for generating detail or clarity on ideas. In this activity it is used to explore several proposals for social action. The room is set up like a café with groups of people sitting at different tables. At each table there is an objective for a social action and a table host (a note-taker). Participants visit the tables and share their ideas for social action to achieve the objective. A table host records the key points of the discussion and presents back to the group

#### Learning Outcomes:

Skills in project planning and management – agenda setting

Skills in project planning and management – understanding stakeholder analysis

#### Preparations and Materials

Set the room up like a café with tables with chairs around them and refreshments.

Note to Facilitator:

Tables should not seat more than 10 people or have fewer than four people attending. With this in mind, for groups of 30 it is recommended to have between four and seven tables. This of course depends on the number of social action groups.

1. It's important to have a clear purpose when using World Café, this might be to engage in dialogue, or generate ideas and solutions. Remember though, participants should set the agenda.

2. In World Café you need to find questions that matter to those participating. See '[Crafting Good Questions](#)'. Good questions are simple and clear, thought-provoking, challenge people and their assumptions, generate energy, keep people

focused, and continuously open up new ideas and possibilities.

3. Brainstorm the questions the group want to explore. Some of the group may want to look at opportunities for sharing and learning in the group or begin talking about social actions, others may want a dialogue on a difficult issue.

4. Make the wording neutral and vote on which are the three to six subjects that participants want to discuss (make sure each subject has at least five people who are interested in discussing it).

#### Approach:

Each table has a different social action objective placed at the centre (ideally representing all the social action groups). Beneath the objective are the following questions:

1. Does this objective address a need in the community? What evidence is there? How could you find out more about the needs of your target group?

2. What ideas do you have for social action to achieve this objective?

3. What are the challenges and opportunities in achieving this objective?

4. Participants are invited to share ideas that are realistic, avoid high risks, will have a meaningful impact and do not require a large amount of time and resources.

5. One of the tables will be reserved for discussing the following question: 'Delivering brilliant social action projects, what are the challenges, opportunities and stories of success?'

6. Each table now has a different subject. Share with participants that they will shortly be invited to sit at a table. After 30 minutes they will be asked to move to another table. There will be three rounds of

30 minutes (participants will have the opportunity to visit three tables).

**7.** Participants should self-organise, try to avoid more than 10 people at a table – they can always visit a full table during another round.

Alternate Approach:

An alternative approach to generating conversation on issues related to Active Citizens is to use Open Space methodology or to arrange a dialogue or organise a social evening or event where participants are invited to hold conversations on a theme.

In this case each table can be a change (an issue the group wants to overcome). Agree some appreciative questions for each table which would help the group to think specifically about what the change would look like and some of the action Active Citizens could take. As part of this conversation the group may want to practice their learning by discussing: what works well in the community, some of the systems and power relationships in relation to the change being discussed and where there are opportunities for small actions (tweaks) to have long-lasting impact. This is an opportunity to get ideas from the whole group. See the planning your social action tools to support this process.

### Social Enterprise

Depending on the emphasis of the group, this activity could be used in three different ways to engage with and explore social enterprise:

Run the activity as described above, but use one of the following three alternative focuses:

**1.** A table could be themed, as a part of the main activity, to discuss: 'Is social enterprise a way of delivering sustainable and inclusive social action? What are the challenges and opportunities? Are these similar/different for different groups of people? E.g. women, men, people with disabilities etc.

**2.** The activity could be reused to explore any questions participants have around social enterprise in their context. Participants can first be invited to make suggestions around what the different discussion topics for each table should be.

**3.** The activity could be reused to allow each social action group to get feedback on their social enterprise idea or generate ideas for turning their social action project into a social enterprise. One member of each social action group would lead a table, with the other members circulating. A goal of this activity could be to encourage decision making on which enterprise activities to pursue.

For all above options, time should be allowed at the end for groups to reconvene and disseminate what was learned in plenary.