

Youth

Taking Action on Climate Change

Facilitation

What is a facilitator?

A facilitator is someone whose task is to draw out the suggestions from the participants, not to impose her or his own opinions, while still using leadership skills to maintain the order and purpose of the session. The facilitator will ensure that the group works as a constructive and cohesive unit.

Why is a facilitator needed?

People come together for a variety of reasons. Sometimes the participants are referred to as teams, groups, or committees. Although these terms are used interchangeably, it is generally recognized that teams have a common bond and groups, on the other hand, are usually not as cohesive and not accountable to each other. The basic assumption is that two heads (or more) are better than one and better decisions can be made if there is more input. However, this requires a leader to guide the process. This person would be identified as the facilitator.

Attributes of an effective facilitator include:

- Openness
- Honesty and fairness
- Consistency in actions
- Focus
- Active listening
- Accessibility
- Flexibility
- Assertiveness
- Enthusiasm

Tips on facilitation:

- The facilitator leads each session;
- The facilitator sets the ground rules;
- The facilitator identifies the goals for the meeting;
- The facilitator calls for suggestions from the participants;
- No criticism (of anyone's suggestion) by anyone is allowed;
- All suggestions should be recorded on the board (even the crazy ones);
- The facilitator maintains focus – if the group or an individual gets off topic politely stop them and refocus them;
- The facilitator encourages the group to feed off one another;
- The facilitator maintains order of the group discussion;
- The facilitator encourages participants from talking at the same time;
- The facilitator tactfully stops participants from dominating the floor;
- The facilitator ensures all contributions to the discussion are treated equally and that no-one is rebuffed for their input;
- The facilitator allows everyone to have a voice;
- The facilitator controls problem people within the group allowing everyone to participate freely; and
- The facilitator makes sure to adhere to the meeting timetable thus ensuring completion of the session.