

Section 2: Note to Users

Effective training of facilitators is best done by or with people who have first-hand experience in using community-led approaches.

This section makes extensive use of participatory role-plays, with group reflection on the process and how to improve the facilitator's skills.

A useful approach, however, is to intermix these activities with the reflective activities promoted in Section 1. For example, if a person who is learning how to facilitate a community-led process shows during a role-play a need for additional practice regarding empathy or asking probing questions, one could have the participant complete that evening the relevant tools on empathy (FAC 4) and asking probing questions (FAC 6).

TRN 4. Gallery Walk and Discussion on “Community”

A. Background

Purpose: Use of the term “community-led” assumes that one knows what a community is. The term “community” can suggest that communities are relatively homogeneous and have more similarities than differences. However, communities exhibit enormous variety and differences that can have significant implications for how to engage with them and for the development of community-driven action. The purpose of this gallery walk and discussion, then, is to help participants to think in nuanced, critical ways about what is a community and how communities vary.

Time: 60 mins.

No. of participants: Over 25 people, ideally.

Materials needed:

- 3 decks of 30 or so index cards per deck, pens, sticking material
- relatively large space, with ways of displaying the cards (e.g., they can be spread on the ground or be attached to the walls)

B. Facilitator's Notes

It is important to problematize the term “community” and to enrich our understanding of the diversity and complexity of processes that may be hidden within this term. This session is intended to stimulate reflection that help participants unpack what is meant by “community” in different contexts. It seeks to stimulate critical thinking that enables participants to move beyond romanticized ideas of community and to develop a more contextualized view that recognizes the limits of the term.

The activity involves five steps, with approximate time frames as indicated below:

- 1) Assign participants to three groups of approximately equal size, giving index cards to each group (5 mins).
- 2) Give each group its assignment and location in the room (5 mins).
- 3) Through discussion, each group generates key terms that describe “community” in that setting and places them on the wall (15 mins).

- 4) Each group has one person stay with its cards and be a “discussant” while everyone else moves around the room, viewing and commenting on the work of the other groups (15 mins).
- 5) Plenary discussion while standing (20 mins).

Step 1: Formation of three groups

To divide participants into three groups of approximately equal size on a random basis, ask people to count off as “one,” “two,” or “three.” Then ask all the “ones” to stand together, all the “twos” to stand together, and all the “threes” to stand together. Give each group about 25 index cards, several markers, and sticking material if they will be attaching the cards to a wall.

Step 2: Group assignments

Invite each group to move to a particular area, where there is open space for displaying the index cards once they have been written on. Speaking so everyone can hear, tell group 1 that it will be thinking about community in the context of a cohesive, rural village. Tell group 2 that it will be thinking about community in the context of a peri-urban neighborhood that is stable but has significant ethnic and religious differences and some tensions surrounding them. Tell group 3 that it will be thinking about an urban neighborhood with low social cohesion and extensive population movement.

When the three groups are listening, ask each group to write the word “COMMUNITY” on a card and place it at the center of the space so that other cards can also be placed around it. Next, ask each group to discuss for a few minutes how they would describe “community” in that setting. Then, they should as a group generate about 15 words that describe “community” in that setting, discussing among themselves which are most appropriate. One person should take notes during this time. When the 15 (or so) words have been agreed on, write each on a separate index card. Then place the 15 cards in the space around the “community” card, with the most important descriptors placed closest to the “community” card. (Alternately, the group could generate words and place them in the space or on a wall, with discussion and revision [taking down one card and replacing it with another] as they go).

When the cards have been displayed, ask the groups to identify one or two critical questions or observations that should be kept in mind when discussing communities. Each of these questions should be written one per card, with the question cards at the very bottom of the set of cards on display. Tell the groups that they will have 15 minutes to complete their work. Remind them that it is natural for different people to have different ideas and there is no “correct” answer—only the items with the greatest agreement need be displayed. Also remind them that they have extra cards that they can use to revise as they continue their discussions.

Step 3: Groups complete their assignments

During this time (15 minutes), walk around to each group, make sure they have understood the instructions, and answer any questions. It is important to be flexible—if a group can only come up with 9 or 10 words to display, that can be fine. Also, it is natural for the group working on the urban context to experience more challenges, and they may even decide to reject the task since there may be no “community.” If this happens, ask them to write on cards several key points from their group discussion.

Ask the group to indicate to the facilitator when they have completed their assignment. When they have, ask each group to designate one person as a “discussant” who will stay by the group’s cards to share (not defend) the thinking of the group when others come to read their cards.

Step 4: Gallery walk

Invite everyone except the three discussants to leave their own group and visit the other group sites to read their work. Ask them to pay attention to the differences in the descriptors used by the three groups and differences in how the cards were placed as well. Remind people to read the critical questions, too, and to feel free to talk and discuss as they move around with others. Invite people to “mix it up” and talk with lots of people, breaking out of their own group.

Step 5: Plenary reflective discussion

In the plenary reflection, it can be useful to invite discussion about how communities differ, and how they are similar, writing notes on a flipchart as one proceeds. The differences serve as a poignant reminder of how important it is to avoid a cookie-cutter approach to working with communities and to work in a contextually appropriate manner.

Next, it is important to ask participants about the implication these differences have for community-led approaches to children’s protection. You might want to consider that higher levels of social cohesion generally make it easier to do community-led work.

Yet even in peri-urban settings with only moderate social cohesion, community-led approaches have proven to be feasible and useful. By its nature, the community-led process described in this Toolkit helps to build social cohesion, which increases as people focus on a common goal—the well-being of their children—and identify common harm(s) to children to be addressed and a common intervention to address it.

Enabling a community-led approach in urban neighborhoods with high levels of turnover and also competition for scarce resources is likely more complex and may not seem possible except for activists who live there and really understand its nuances. At the very least, using a community-led approach in such a context would require more time devoted to building an inclusive process, managing conflict, and giving time for the planning process to build a sufficient base of social cohesion. Also, the neighborhood collective would need to construct a

means of managing the turnover of people and think in new ways about how to achieve sustainability.

If time permits, it can be useful first to invite discussion of 1–3 of the critical questions that had been raised, making linkage with the question about the implications for community-led approaches.