Breakout Group Facilitators

Breakout Group Facilitators are mainly needed in the deliberation phase of a Community Assembly, with at least one facilitator per group.

If you prefer to watch a training video, this is the XR's Community Assemblies Facilitation training on YouTube.

What do you need to do as a breakout group facilitator during the deliberation phase?

- Introduce yourself briefly. Say this whichever way works for you, in your own words.

> “I am volunteering today as a facilitator. Our group is a safe place for us all to share our experience, understanding of the topic and to work together. Please keep confidential what people say in our group today; do not name people and ensure people cannot be identified when discussing today with others.
>
> Remember: no one person has all the answers. Please respect other people's right to hold opinions that you disagree with. We are all here to listen to each other and be heard.
>
> So everyone has enough time to speak, we will be limited to [X] minutes. Everyone will speak uninterrupted for [X] minutes at a time until finished. Everyone else will listen."

- Remind people of the Community Assembly question that is being deliberated on.
- Ask for one of the group to volunteer to be the Notetaker.
- Show the hand signals again for:
  - I want to speak
  - Temperature check
  - Speak up
  - Round up
- Egg timers can be used as visual prompts to ease the timekeeping element of facilitation, as they are visible to all. If no egg timers are available, the facilitator can keep time and make the ‘round up’ hand signal when the speaker has had their allowed time, or you can ask someone to volunteer to time-keep.
- Remind people of the Inclusivity Statement and need for respectful, active listening and no interruptions allowed as per the guidelines they agreed to earlier, often called the

Three Pillars.

> “We value all voices equally in the assembly, as the aim is to hear the wisdom of the crowd gathered here and not to have the assembly dominated by individual voices or groups. We recognise that confident speakers are not always right and that those who are not confident speakers will often have the most useful ideas or opinions to put into the discussion. This is why we value all voices equally and we ask you to do the same. We do not tolerate any calling out, abuse or shaming. We welcome all people but not all behaviours.”

Run a first round of everyone briefly introducing themselves and saying what they hope to gain from the event:

- Invite people to share their access needs and where possible, accommodate these.
- Invite people to voice their opinions, thoughts or questions.
- Make sure everyone has a go at voicing their opinion.
- If questions arise from speeches and speakers are available for ‘speed question’ sessions, invite them to your table.
- When it is time, indicated by the Main Facilitator, guide the group to decide on priority statements (ideally 3 statements per breakout group. This also depends on what the Community Assembly working group decided, so it could be more or less) to share during the imminent and final integration phase of the assembly.
  - Repeat the main topics that have been mentioned.
  - Ask the Notetaker to fill in gaps or topics that you may have forgotten to summarise.
  - Lead a temperature check on which statements should be brought to the main assembly integration phase.
- Find someone to present the group’s statements. This can be you or the Notetaker, but if someone else might want to do it, that should be encouraged.

More (In-Person) Group Facilitation Tips

- Listen more than you speak
- Ensure everyone has the same length of time to speak
- Gently intervene to stop interruptions using name tags of the person interrupting
- Ask questions to invite people to speak if the discussion isn't flowing
- Also allow silence to run if people don’t come in immediately
- Encourage respect, thanking people for their input, so every participant feels safe to share their ideas
- Encourage quieter members of the group to speak; allow people to write their input or draw images (Post it notes are a great tool here)
- Be sensitive to the emotions that may arise
- Hold the space calmly and without judgement for participants to agree to disagree
- Close each activity by summing up the main ideas

- Have fun. A sense of humour makes things work more smoothly
- Ask for one of the group to prompt when X minutes are left to begin facilitating the group to select their top priorities - see the Review and Prep phase below

Review Of Break-Out Discussion. Prep for the Final (Integration) Phase

When the discussion has reached its time limit, thank everyone for their contributions. Ask the Notetaker to read group comments out again, one by one. Check with the group that the Notetaker has understood each speaker correctly and recorded them accurately (Notetaker amends as necessary).

At the allotted time, ask the Notetaker to summarise ideas and any priorities emerging from the discussion. As the Faciliator, don't allow this to become further discussion as the group may then not have time to identify the top 3 ideas.

Also ask group members to indicate the importance of each idea with hand signals (Demonstrate).

The Notetaker will make a mark of their own choosing next to each idea to denote its level of consensus in the group, e.g. '+' or '✓' to denote one person's agreement; + + / ✓ ✓ = 2 , etc.

Feedback and Whole Assembly Key Points

Your nominated person will read out your key headings and main ideas from your group's discussion to the whole group. The Assembly Notetaker will write these up visibly on flip chart paper.

Other groups may ask your group questions and/or comment. Timing will be framed by the Main Facilitator. Note: comments at this stage can lead to further comments, so be careful to note that further discussion may be needed at a future assembly in order to keep to time.

Each group may feed back in this way, with the whole group clarifying with questions and commenting within the time constraints.

Depending on the process, ideas can be added to large flipchart paper on the walls for everyone in the whole assembly to vote on. Alternatively, the Assembly Notetaker may then read out all of the headings one by one, then may ask the whole group to vote its agreement (Demonstrate hand signals).

Assembly participants may use stickers to note their votes on the flipchart paper. Alternatively, the Assembly Notetaker counts raised hands, adds totals onto the flipchart next to suggestions.

The Main Facilitator then reminds the participants about the eventual usage of the feedback, e.g. to share with local authority. They may also invite everyone to vote on possible next steps, for instance use of Polis or a follow-on assembly along with sharing outputs with the local authority.
