

The typical functions of a facilitator include:

- Organising and directing the activities involved in the project
- Planning, scheduling and leading meetings including ensuring that every scheduled meeting and activity happens
- Ensuring the Agencies understand the process being followed and have their training needs met
- Ensuring that the project is completed according to the plan, within reason
- Acting as the focal point of communications, sharing and centralizing information as is best useful
- Acting as the technical expert that clarifies any doubts about the process or methodology being followed
- Documenting the data generated and updating information on the central website
- Ensuring that solutions are more than just technical reports, but are also practical and implementable
- Recognizing the training needs of the Agencies and providing appropriate training when it is required.
- Encouraging the Agencies
- Managing any problems that may arise: interpersonal conflict, interruptions, etc

When facilitating sharing sessions

Think of yourself as a conductor of a very special and complex orchestra. . .one which you may not have met before, yet you know the players are all accomplished musicians in their own right. Everyone in the room is an expert in their own right as they have been working hard to make change – and in the room you have a whole group of diverse and talented musicians, some of whom have brought their music with them and will really want to play in tune, and others may choose to listen or play quietly as they learn the melody.

What do we suggest?

- ✓ Great conductors do a lot of listening. They attend not only to the key players but also to the minor instrument
- ✓ They have a plan B. We suggest you have a list of questions you can use to help open the discussion. A good start is to use those in the Networking guide. Or use ones like “What surprised you most about what xx said?” We suggest you keep the questions open and generic.
- ✓ Aim to involve as many of the people as possible; if the discussion starts to become a debate between two people, suggest this detail could be taken up outside the meeting. Praise the individuals for their interest, and move on.
- ✓ You may find it useful to use your body language as a way of managing the process. Use your hand to invite someone to speak, smile, move etc – think about how a conductor uses body language (no need to go overboard though!). Non-verbal messages are very important.
- ✓ We advise (and reassure you) that, like a conductor, there is no need for you to play an instrument (i.e. become part of the debate on content).

Prof Sarah Fraser

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