

HOST TEAM MANUAL

A guide for host teams and for those, who guide host teams at Farmer Family Learning Group (FFLG) facilitator courses

Tell me and I will forget
Show me and I will remember
Involve me and I will understand
Step back and I will act

Move around, move from table to table, make every session different from the other sessions of the day. Present group work in galleries or in different places in the room, use cards, role plays, different group work approaches, and use indoor and outdoor space. Dance and play inbetween.



The use of different methods throughout the day makes it more interesting for the participants. A choice of a less suitable method for the focus area, or inappropriate timing, can make even the most interesting topic boring. Choose with care and use your experience and imagination. In this leaflet there is some advice and some ideas.



Farmer Family Learning Groups is an approach which is owned by everybody who uses it and cannot be patented. So is the facilitator course, which uses the same approach: the participants guide the development and take responsibility for their own learning.

The tasks of the host team

- On the evening prior to the day where you are host team: plan the day. The organisers of the facilitator course have given you four topics for the day, based on the first day's exercise where participant expectations were explored, plus what they know is necessary to know as FFLG facilitators. You have to plan the order, the focus and the methods for each of these 4 topics. The organisers will meet with you and discuss the topics and the methods during the late afternoon and evening, where you prepare.
- The planning includes:
 - o Write the program and the posters related to each topic, when you have decided on them.
 - o Research the four topics so that you feel that you have a basic understanding of them. You are not 'teachers', but you should know what is important for people to discuss. Use the resources in the class: the organisers and other participants may have great knowledge or experience in the topics. Do not hesitate to use them!
 - o Select appropriate methods for each topic. Be creative – read the front page of this manual for general advice, and see advice and ideas below.
- Introduce the day at 9 am
- Guide the class through the topics
- Keep time
- Evaluate the day and your own successes and suggestions for improvement after the day is closed.
- Guide the class through the recap on the following day.

The day's program

The structure of a course day can vary between different courses, depending on the routines of the course place. Normally it will be the same time schedule day after day at one course. At all facilitator courses, there will typically be four modules, hence four topics to discuss.

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 8:30-9:00 | Recap from yesterday. Yesterday's host team guides. |
| 9:00-10:30 | Module 1 – planned by the host team. |
| 10:30-11:00 | Health break |
| 11:00-12:30 | Module 2 – planned by the host team |
| 12:30-13:30 | Lunch |
| 13:30-15:30 | Module 3 – planned by the host team |
| 15:30-16:00 | Health break |
| 16:00-17:30 | Module 4 – planned by the host team and includes often a small evaluation of the day, given by participants as a brainstorm. |
| 17:30 | The host team makes self-evaluation together with organisers, and plan tomorrow's recap |
| 20:00 | Dinner |

General advice on participatory methods

- Explain the method, so that people are prepared from the beginning on what will happen. For example, if groups will be split up halfway in the exercise, say it from the beginning. Participants may still not have the full overview over what will happen, but at least they are prepared that 'something' will happen. Be prepared to guide the groups when you start.
- Always tell participants what is expected from them, e.g. a presentation or a drama or feeding-in to a plenary discussion or other results of their activities.

- Deliberately choose different presenters, chair persons or secretaries from the group. You are the host team – you design the day! Some classes end up with 5 or 6 people who always present group work, and a lot of passive people. Appoint some people at every group exercise to present.
- Before you send people to their group work, always be clear how much time they are given for this discussion or activity.
- Make flip charts or cards or paper and markers ready. Remember to protect tables and walls with cover, if the marker ink goes through the paper.
- Walk between groups and make sure that the discussions are flowing well and they have understood the questions which you have asked, in the same way as you. Clarify misunderstandings. Maybe you were imprecise when you formulated the question.
- Always plan for time to create the groups, and plan for the time which it will take for each group to establish and find the table and find a balance in the discussion. Plan for that also when you have designed an exercise where people should split or move table.

Big groups – small groups?

There are different advantages and disadvantages of using big groups and small groups:

| Small groups | Big groups |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More people are activated at the same time - Each person contributes more to the group – if a group consists of three persons, then everybody contributes with a third of the ideas and inputs - You can get a common understanding of a topic quicker – in a big group you maybe have to negotiate for long time before you understand the same thing. - The chance of discussing something which is relevant to all participants is bigger in small groups because everybody contributes actively - Good for clarifications and identification of important issues - Good for strengthening everybody’s own ideas and perceptions of a topic - The risk is that the amount of ideas can be small especially if one person is inactive - Good advice on timing: small groups normally exhaust a topic quite quickly. Therefore never plan for discussions in small groups of for example 2 or 3 persons for more than maximum 10 minutes. In ‘discuss-with-your-neighbor-buzz-groups’ you can sometimes go down to 3-4 minutes depending on the topic. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More ideas on the table - Good for development of ideas from something abstract – e.g. discussion of ‘sustainability’: many different opinions and experiences come together. - There is a risk that some take the lead and are very active, and others fall back, hang on the chair or starts leaving the group. - To prevent the above: allocate one person as facilitator, who should ensure that everybody is heard in the group. That should be another person than the secretary. - Another way to make sure that everybody participates: you decide a presenter from the group when they are going to present, and not before. In that way everybody in the group should be prepared to be asked to present. - Good advice on timing: big groups normally have to spend more time to understand the same from the question, and more time for negotiations. Every person should have minimum 2-3 minutes talking time in a group in average. That means that a group size of 10 should never have less than 20-30 minutes. |

Generally on group work and presentations

- Encourage the groups to discuss! People learn from discussing. They do not learn from just listing what somebody in the group says, and then uncritically move on to the next remark from another group member. Encourage the group members to challenge each other.
- When people present: be clear on whether you will allow the audience to interrupt with questions or not.
- You are the host team. You are the facilitator of the day. That means:
 - o You protect the ones who are given the words to let them finish what they say.
 - o You are the time keeper. Never let the presenter take more time than they were given in your instructions. If you have said '10 minutes', then it is 10 minutes full stop.
 - o Never let the presenter be the one struggling with keeping time or guiding the discussion – you are the facilitator and the one who directs who is allowed to comment or ask questions.
- Be aware that there is a difference between:
 - o A brain storm: you ask people to give inputs
 - o A discussion: people give inputs, and each input is open for discussion

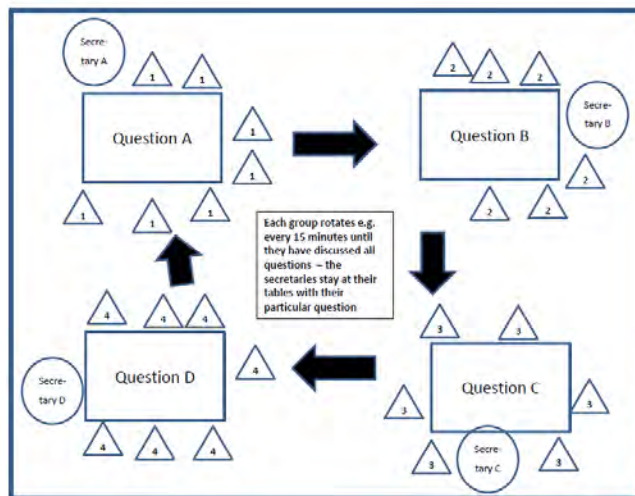
Some ideas for participatory methods

Let everybody reflect in silence or with their neighbour before going to a group

Before some group works – probably not all – it can be a good idea to let everybody reflect on the question alone or with the neighbour. It can be a good way of understanding the question, clearing one's mind and get focused and prepared for the discussion.

Café discussions: groups move from table to table

- *a dynamic and structured way of group discussions, where all participants discuss each question in a given time frame and move on to the next table to discuss the next issue.*



- Prepare four issues / questions and place each question at a table in different corners of the class room
- Select a secretary for each table. She or he stays at the table.
- Form 4 groups in the class and let each group go a table.
- Allow the group to discuss their first issue e.g. 15 or 20 minutes, and then ring a bell.
- When the bell rings, all groups rotate to a new table. The secretary stays.
- Repeat, until all groups have discussed all questions. If you have 4 questions it is for example 4 x 15 minutes: one hour all in all.

- Let the group secretaries present in plenary after the group discussions. Normally they can do that in 8-10 minutes per table, and there will not be much discussion because everybody has discussed all questions. This means that this exercise can take place in a 1½ hr. time slot.

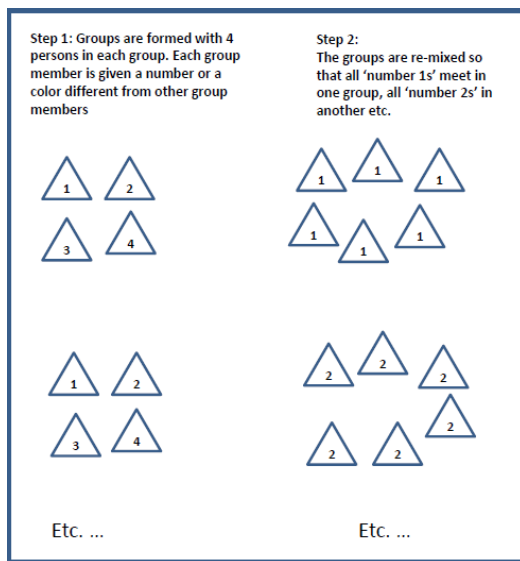
Variations:

- There is no secretary at the tables. Only the question remains, and every group starts from scratch.
- You have made only two questions, and groups just swop once, so that every group has discussed both questions.

- ‘The chaos café’: have a secretary at each table, but do not form four groups from the start. Distribute people equally at the tables for the first discussion. Every time the bell rings, all have to find a new table, but not necessarily with the persons which whom they were before. Ask them to adjust to group sizes by themselves. All participants must discuss all questions before the end of the exercise.

Cut-and-mix

- *A method which stirs up the discussion and can be used to focus some questions more and more.*



- Divide people into groups of four (fits with a class of approx. 24 participants), and give each of the four group members a number from 1 to 4, or a colour card e.g. yellow, blue, red and green. Let them discuss a question for e.g. 15 minutes. You can choose to give each group different questions. This means that when the new groups come together (step 2) then each member come with different questions and answers as background.

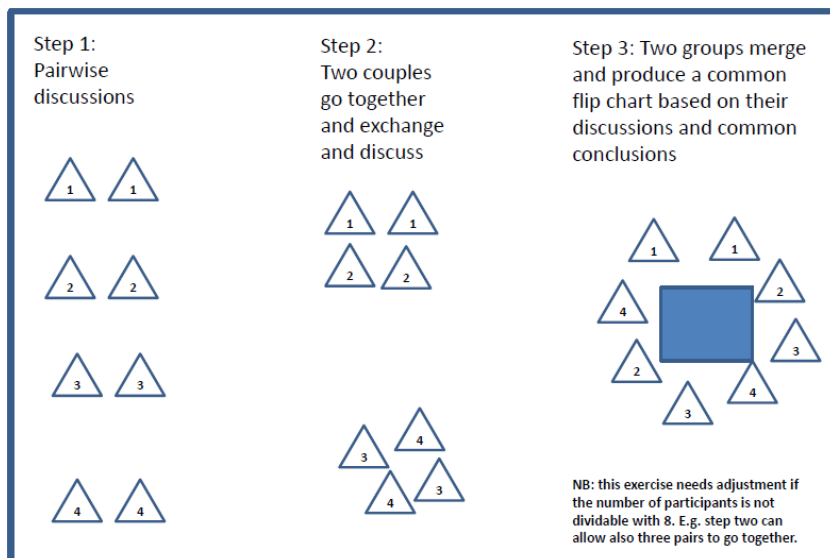
- Split the groups and ask ‘all number 1s’ or ‘all yellow’ (etc.) to go together. You can give the same question to all groups, and build on the different angles from the first group discussion, so that each of the group members exchange what they discussed in his or her first group. Allocate more time for this.

- **Variation:** you can also do the opposite: give four questions to all groups in ‘Step 1’ and give them time to discuss, e.g. 20 minutes (5 minutes for each question), and then let the four following groups

in ‘Step 2’ specialise in each of these four questions.

‘Increase the circle’ exercise

- *a method which allows everybody to first identify the issues, and then stimulates negotiation about the important elements and/or possible solutions. Good for big and complex questions*



Practical demonstrations

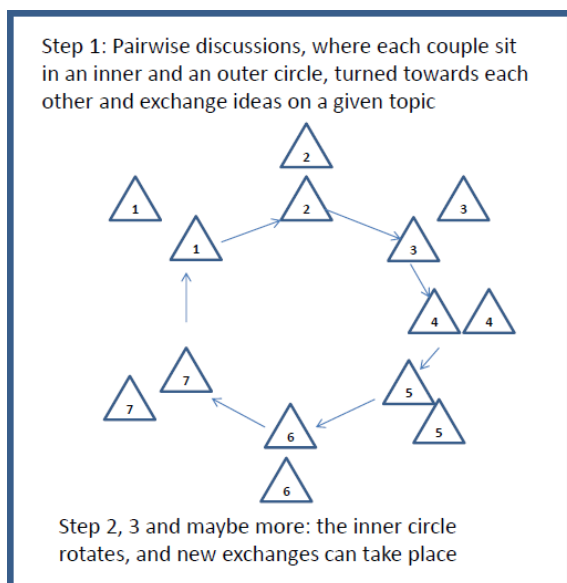
Use every possibility to make things practical. Practical demonstrations are particularly useful in relation to organic agriculture topics. Make an AESA outdoor in groups, or make a practical demonstration on how to build a compost heap, or how to prepare a nursery bed. The surrounding guides you: some facilitator courses take place at a community centre where they have a kitchen garden, others in a place where there is a local farmer who is willing to let people make a compost heap or look around on the farm to make an AESA. Research the possibilities together with the organisers.

Farm planning: a case study method

Let four course participants draw their own farm at home on a flip chart. Form four groups around them, and let them take their groups on a farm walk. Let the group discuss suggestions for improvements. This exercise should be given at least 45 minutes.

Margolis wheel

- *A good method for exchanging viewpoints and refine the participants' thoughts on certain issue, and maybe gradually develop with all the many different inputs.*



- Place people in two circles, so that they sit pairwise facing each other. Ask them to share their views on a certain question or topic. After 7-10 minutes, ask all persons in the inner circle to move to the chair to their right side, and share with a new person. Repeat 2-3 times.

- You can choose to finish the exercise by asking everybody to share their key learning in a plenary session.
- You can vary the exercise by asking every participant to interview the other on a certain question, and give two different questions to the persons in the inner and the outer circle, respectively.

- You can also ask a different question on each round.
- You can also ask everybody to use the exercise to build on each their topic and explore in a dialogue how others

understand this topic.

- You can ask the persons in the inner circle to move two chairs to their right side every time.

Role play

Split the class in two (or groups of approx. 10-12 people), and ask each group to make a drama about the same theme, but with different situations. For example if the thematic question is 'How can a facilitator stimulate good or bad group dynamics?' then let one group make a drama about good group dynamics which is stimulated very well, and the other group about bad group dynamics making a group falling apart. Remember to allow time – about 30 minutes – for a common reflection on what they learnt from the role plays and for discussion on the topic.

'Metaplan': place cards on the wall or on the floor

Good for bringing everybody's ideas or points together in a pattern.

- Ask everybody to write a maximum of three cards as a response or with an idea related to an overall question, and give them e.g. 8-10 minutes to do this while reflecting. It could also be drawings.

- Ask the first participant to come up to the wall with one card and read it aloud and explain it (if it is a drawing it should be explained). Ask the other participants whether they have something similar and invite them to put their cards near to the first one, so that related cards appear in a 'cloud'.
- When this theme has been exhausted, invite a participant who has not yet contributed to open a new 'cloud', and let him/her explain a card. Repeat the procedure: invite those participants with cards with very similar or related issues/ideas/statements, and allow them to say 2-3 sentences about their card (not more).
- When all 'clouds of cards' have been placed, finish off with a general discussion.

Designing a debate

A method for exploring arguments for or against certain approaches, statements or methods.

- Divide the group into two groups and ask one group to come up with as many arguments as possible in favour of a given statement or for a certain approach. Ask the other group to find as many arguments against the same issue.
- After some time of preparation, guide the debate so that arguments are related to each other.
- Variation: It can also be divided into more groups, where each of them for example argue for a certain approach or a certain solution to a problem.

High five – what do I do when I go home?

- *This exercise is suggested in a manual by Femke Gordijn, Jan Helder and Natalia Ernstman, Wageningen University, July 2012: 'Reflection methods. Tools to Make Learning More Explicit', which was shared by Godfrey of Sulma Foods ltd. at the facilitator course October 2013. It should only be used on the last day, if chosen.*

This exercise could be a good way to let every participant reflect on how they will bring new learning home and start acting on it, when home. Ask everybody to draw their hand on a flipchart and write a statement following the guide below, for every finger:

- 1) I have learned ... (key learning point)
- 2) I usually do what I like to do best. When I get home it will be ...
- 3) I will stimulate the team at home to
- 4) I plan in the long term to ...
- 5) I should not when I return home

Use energizers and play – fun gives energy

So many different energizers exist and many know them: draw on their ideas. Remember the timing of energizers:

- o After breaks – especially lunch break. Not before having a break.
- o When people have been sitting for a presentation for more than 20 minutes, for example
- o Watch people. When eyes get narrow and they sink down in their chairs it is time.