

Creative Techniques in Working with Groups

What is creativity?

"Being creative is seeing the same thing as everybody else but thinking of something different" (www.members.optusnet.com.au)

Communities sometimes come across problems that are worth solving but the ability to do so is hindered by various existing factors.

To be creative is to have the ability of creating knowledge in order to solve problems. Creativity gives us the opportunity to think about and produce ideas and information that have never been thought of or considered. This involves having the tendency to generate an idea or a possible alternative to solve an existing or foreseen problem or change a situation in an uncontrolled environment.

Why Creative

To be able to communicate ideas and values.

To be able to get a wider participation

To be able to solve problems in a less stressful situation

To make problem solving fun and enjoyable

Where does creativity come from?

Communities and groups can improve their ability to be creative by exploring, combining and using various techniques developed and tested to enable them solve complex and delicate issues requiring active consultation.

In order to be creative, there is the need to be able to view things in new ways or from a different perspective and to be able to generate new possibilities or alternatives.

Creativity measures not only the number of alternatives generated but the uniqueness of those alternatives. The ability to generate alternatives or to see things uniquely does not occur by chance; it is linked to other, more fundamental qualities of thinking, such as flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity or unpredictability, and the enjoyment of things heretofore unknown. (*Human Motivation*, 3rd ed., by Robert E. Franken, page 394)

Among others, creativity comes from a variety of sources such as

Different personalities
Life experience
Environment

Bouncing ideas
Intuition
Imagination

Observations / surroundings
Need to survive
Experiences

Joining together of different ideas
Creating new horizons
Factions

Tapping into knowledge of others
Generating energy

Barriers to Participation/Learning

Some of the barriers that need overcoming in order for people to express their views and be more creative include among others the following

Accessibility	Environment	Confidence	Ability
Personalities	Status	Low self esteem	Age
Lack of understanding	Time	Income / cost	
Personal problems			

Factors of Participation

Motivation	Cue
Engagement	Activity
Evaluation &Feedback	Reinforcement

Creative ways of involving people in community consultation

Quizzes	Games
Cards	Alternative Scenarios
BRAN	Consensus mapping
Problem reversal	Traffic light techniques
Three sentence limit	Cherry Split
Breakdown and reassemble	And many more

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO LEARNING - USING THE CAROSEL TECHNIQUE

Lack of commitment

- Offer training
- Make sure people know what they're getting into
- Praise
- Inspirational games and exercises
- Make it accessible – break it up
- Make it fun
- Specify how much commitment is needed

Age

- Encourage people to state their abilities
- Target people to involve

- Hold meetings at different times
- Use different techniques – not just talking
- Ice cream

Lack of understanding

- Hold informal meetings
- Include training element to sessions
- Simplify your material
- Explain things
- Don't use jargon
- Improve induction sessions
- Provide information
- Use press releases

Seriousness

- Crack a joke
- Wear something unusual
- Hold fun events
- Interactive material
- Play games

For more information of how to use creative methods to consult with your groups, contact:

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