WORKSHOP
for the SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Animation Sheet

Activity sheet - Four-cornered debate: the role of each party in participative action

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Objectives:

- Identify the different potential roles for facilitators based on the participants' practices.
- Identify the fact that these positions can change depending on the context and the group.
- Identify that roles can be shared with collective members.

Materials: 4 posters to be placed around the room: "facilitators" / "community leaders" / "project coordinators" / "community members" (These headings can be adapted to suit the context, and some can also be added: for example, to distinguish between "central facilitators" and "grass roots facilitators", or "volunteers" and "employees", etc.).

Duration: 30 to 45 minutes, depending on the number of participants

Getting started:

The facilitator presents the aims of this session: to reflect on the roles of each person in participative processes, based on their own practice. The facilitator asks a series of questions. Each time, the participants position themselves under the poster that seems most relevant to them. In some cases, several answers may seem relevant: in this case, people are invited to choose a poster for which they have a concrete example from their own practice to share with the group.

After each question, when everyone is positioned, the facilitator asks participants who wish to do so to explain their choice, and to give examples from their own practice.

Debate questions :
1. Who can initiate a participative action?
2. Who defines the content of the participative action?
3. Who is responsible for involving participants in a participative activity?
4. Who regulates the power relationships within a collective undertaking participative action?
5. Who is responsible for the success of the participative action?

Elements for the debrief
1. Who can initiate a participative action?
   Participative action can be proposed/initiated by different people. We often have the ideal representation of an action initiated directly by a local collective, but observation of the dynamics of participative action shows that an external trigger is often needed. This trigger can be the proposal of a facilitator, a project team, or the initiative of local players. What's important is what happens next.

2. Who defines the content of the participative action?
   Although the action can be initiated by people from outside a local collective, it is essential that it is the collective itself that defines the content of the action. The facilitators and project team can support the collective in its reflection (for example, through a vision workshop or a "desire for action" photolanguage workshop) but cannot themselves define the content of the action.

3. Who is responsible for involving participants in a participative activity?
   Mobilising participants can be a shared responsibility! It also depends on the context and the group: do the participants already know each other well or not? Are they used to organising action together or not? This may or may not affect the need for the facilitators to involve the participants on a regular basis.

4. Who regulates the power relationships within a collective undertaking participative action?
   The responsibility for regulating power relations within the group is one that can be shared. By virtue of their training, facilitators can take this on. The more the group knows about each other and has received training to make them aware of these power relationships, the more this responsibility can be shared.

5. Who is responsible for the success of the participative action?
   This is a shared responsibility! The facilitators and the project teams can in no way be held solely responsible for the smooth running of the participative action, which also depends on the collective. That's why you need to let go...

Link to the article : The four-cornered debate : defining our roles in participatory actions - L'atelier de la transformation sociale

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