The World Café

"Creating a positive future begins in human conversation. The simplest and most powerful investment any member of a community or an organization may make in renewal is to begin talking with other people as though the answers mattered."

Adapted from
Who Will Tell the People
by William Greider

Café is a metaphor, a guiding image. World Café is a methodology to create a network of connection around 'questions that matter'. It is a creative process for stimulating collaborative dialogue, sharing knowledge and creating possibilities for future action in groups of all sizes. World Café is based on the assumption that we generate meaning as a result of the quality of the communications in which we participate.

Key Process Principles –

1. Clarify the Context

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- What topic / issue to be explained?
- Who needs to be there?
- When?
- How long?
- What themes are likely to stimulate creativity?

2. Create a Hospitable Space

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Creating a worm, inviting and hospitable environment

3. Explore question(s) that matter
Such questions need to –
- Be simple and clear
- Be thought provoking
- Generate energy
- Focus inquiry
- Open new possibilities
- Invite deeper reflection
- Seek what is useful

Important that question(s) that invite explanation of possibilities and connect participants with why they care.

4. Encourage Everyone's Contribution

5. Connect Diverse Perspectives

6. Listen Together and Notice Patterns

7. Share Collective Discoveries

Value of World Café Process –

1. Provides an occasion to generate input, share knowledge, stimulate innovative thinking and explore action possibilities around real issues and question.

2. Enables engagement of people in authentic conversation.

3. Allows in depth exploration of key strategic challenges and / or opportunities.

4. Deepens relationships and mutual ownership of outcomes in an existing group.

5. Creates meaningful interaction between speaker and listeners.

6. Enables the engagement of large groups.

Not Useful If –

1. There is already a pre determined solution or answer.
2. Sponsoring group wants to convey one way information.
3. Detailed implementation plans are required.
4. Group is fewer than 12 (better to utilise focus group).

(Information drawn from www.theworldcafe.com)