Session: Effective Meetings (Simulation)

AGENDA: Day:

Time:

DURATION: 50 minutes

OBJECTIVES:

✓ Identify best practices for holding effective meetings
✓ Describe how to organize and stick to a meeting agenda
✓ Consider strategies to define goals, develop consensus and implementation/action plans

MATERIALS:

• Meeting room table, ideally long, rectangular
• Enough seating for facilitators, and most participants,
• Flip chart,
• Flip chart markers

PREPARATION: (before the session)

• Taking into account the context of the training and the group/groups of participants, choose a meeting topic that would be suitable. The meeting should be used both as a simulation but also as a real meeting to discuss a certain topic that relates to the cluster. The topic could be chosen by the facilitator in advance.

• Ask a member or a group of participants to chair the meeting and to take charge of all arrangements including the logistical ones.
Note to facilitator

This session is a simulation of a meeting but without role play. It should be used as an opportunity to learn about effective meeting skills through an actual meeting which results in concrete outcomes on a topic of importance to the cluster.

The chair of the meeting could be from the participants but it is recommended to have it shared by someone from the facilitator group in order to take the criticism afterwards without affecting the group feeling.

Some examples for a meeting topic would be:

- The government has requested an urgent briefing from the Protection Cluster about their TORs and their priorities. (This was used in Mindanao as a first step to identify the main points of a cluster TOR)

- The regional office is meeting with the clusters from the region to clarify its support role and the expectations of the country clusters (this was used in the regional cluster training for West Africa)

- This is a cluster meeting to discuss protection mainstreaming and what are some of the activities we want to start working on as a cluster to ensure mainstreaming of protection within the other clusters? (Share the Protection Mainstreaming tools by the Mainstreaming Task Team which can be found on the GPC website)

Once the meeting is ‘over’ this should be concluded with a detailed debrief underlining the ‘do’s and ‘do nots’ to holding effective meetings. This facilitators guide highlights these ‘do’s and ‘do nots’ later in this outline.
1. The Meeting

► The facilitator opens the meeting, explaining that we will have quick 30 minute meeting to discuss some issues that have been brought to the attention of the facilitators.

► Refer to the agenda, and re-state the agenda items

► Ask for Any other business?

► Conduct the meeting, according to the agenda, allowing for those participants and facilitators with roles to interject and interrupt the flow of the meeting.

► Observe how other participants react, if possible make notes during the meeting for debrief.

► If necessary provide ‘cues’ to the participants and facilitators with assigned roles to ‘act’ their parts at particular times during the meeting.

2. Debrief

Structure the debriefing based on ‘before, ‘during’ and ‘after’ the meeting.

**Before**

Ask questions to participants regarding, what could have been done before the meeting to make it more effective?

**Answer key**

- Ask yourself: “Do you really need to have a meeting?”
- Be clear on purpose
- Share the information needed
- Invite the right people with enough notice
- Arrange a time and a place
- Arrange a suitable venue
- Have one-to-one preparatory meetings to clarify and understand individuals’ positions
## During

Ask questions to participants regarding, what could have been done during the meeting to make it more effective?

- Be clear about PURPOSE and PROCESS
- Impartiality & inclusivity
- Assertiveness
- Staying on course
- Active listening skills – build trust and team
- Stick to time
- Acknowledge and address differences / difficult group dynamics

### Closing the meeting

- Any other business
- Restate action points & outcomes
- Clarify next steps if some issues went unresolved
- Remind people when to expect minutes and information up-dates
- Clarify date of next meeting

Ask questions to participants regarding, what could have been done after the meeting to make it more effective?

- Seek feedback
- Circulate minutes
- Act on the actions you agreed to carry out
- Have one-to-ones with meeting

## Being a good participant

### Before:

- Come informed and prepared
- Consult with decision makers before attending

### During:

- Give signals to the chair if you want to talk
- Listen to and respect other members

### After:

- Give feedback to the chair at the end on their chairing style
- Take the actions you agreed to after the meeting
- Feedback to your organization