

Collaborative Strategic Planning

Centre for Facilitation | FORWARD

“you got us to really think about our strategy and we were all engaged in the discussions. It’s a great start to our projects and a pleasure, as always, to work with you”

Naana Otoo-Oyortey, Executive Director

Keys to Success

1. Setting time limits for activities so that decisions were made and ideas recorded and the task completed in the time allocated
2. Using a large charts to capture the theory of change so everyone could get involved and see the work evolve
3. Providing examples of what a completed theory of change could look like to provide clarity and structure



Strategic Retreat: using theories of change

FORWARD is an African-led women’s rights organisation. The work of FORWARD focuses on responding to female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage, and other forms of violence against African women and girls.

FORWARD have developed a new strategy and plan for the next five years and now want to focus on how to make this plan operational. A strategic retreat was arranged for 4 hours so that each of the operational teams could identify an area of activity in the new strategy and develop their theory of change route map to reach their agreed target.

An external facilitator was needed because of the ambitious plan for the strategy session. The five teams (22 people) would develop five distinctive road maps and they wanted collaborative sharing to be at the heart of the retreat.

What was the impact of the strategic retreat?

Many of the team were familiar with theory of change but mainly through taught workshops. At this workshop they experienced creating their own theory of change for their area of work. This was a revelation as one team member commented:

“After many years I now understand the theory of change. So simply and well presented”

In the workshop each group identified their vision for their area of the strategy and then identified the current challenge that they were facing with achieving this vision. Step by step then they started to develop ideas about how to achieve the vision. The activity combined individual reflection, small group discussion and sharing of ideas in the larger forum. The final draft roadmaps were taken away by the team and typed up to form the basis of further team planning.

What were the benefits of having a facilitated session?

The facilitator worked hard to provide a space where everyone could participate. There was time for individuals to reflect and time to share and talk. Everyone’s point of view had the opportunity to be heard.

The process encouraged everyone to read and understand the new strategy document. The ideas that emerged will support the teams to make progress towards the FORWARD vision.

www.centreforfacilitation.co.uk
info@centreforfacilitation.co.uk

