

## Facilitating Mapping Exercises in Consultations

It is well worth while having a few 'experiential' processes available to use in consultancies as these can sometimes allow a group to explore issues collectively in quite a different way than simply talking. Some of these work better with small groups rather than larger ones. One of the features of mapping exercises is that they mix people of different views and get them talking and listening to each other. Getting everyone to move at once is important especially in conflict to avoid factional pressures to go to a particular point or to choose a particular option lining up with a factional view.

All of these experiential exercises have three common purposes of:

- a) Allowing individuals to develop a better understanding of where they have different perceptions, experiences and understandings from others. This increases self awareness.
- b) Allowing individuals to see where others they know and serve with in the church are at and to respond with care and understanding for them.
- c) They give everyone a visual picture of people's views, understandings and experiences which allows a group wide perspective on the situation being explored.

**Note:** *these activities require a room like a church hall. For older people, moveable chairs are needed. For younger people some can work around a table using symbols like mobile phones as markers.*

### 1 Timeline type activities

Using pieces of paper with events and dates written as people share placed in a time line. Work with a group to record some key events that occurred over a period of time.

A simple starter exercise:

- How long have you been a parishioner in this church? As we walk down the timeline, join us and share a reflection. For those who joined the church as adults – what is one thing that they appreciated or noticed about the church when they joined.
- Let people join the line as you walk together down through the story. When everyone is together at the end of the line invited reflections on what people notice in the history.
- Invite everyone to turn and face the future together. What would people like to see on pieces of paper over the next few years.

Mapping a historical process

On each piece of paper record both the event and the day, month or year as appropriate. This maybe a complex event in church life, a conflict, a specific period, sometimes the whole story of the church. Place the pieces on the floor with plenty of room between them to allow the members of the group to walk slowly up and down the line.

Sample questions:

- *Where did you personally join this story?*
- *As you look back over these events - Where is the most painful place? Happiest moment? The moment of realisation or truth? Are there any patterns that you pick up? What is missing? What don't you understand in this journey?*
- *What is happening for you as you view this laid out?*

## 2 Options / Priorities / Alternatives

Again using a number of pieces of paper, document the range of concerns, issues, competing situations, options, priorities or questions a group is dealing with. As the group comes up with these write them down and place them randomly on the floor.

Invite the group to walk around these in turn and listen to comments the group makes.

- *Share the pro's and con's separately of each option*
- *Is there one that stands out for you? Why?*

In the priority version of this exercise, give the group an opportunity to stand on their first, second and maybe third area of priority.

Sample questions:

- *Come and stand on an issue or concern of your choice, tell me about why you have chosen this? What is on your heart as you focus on this issue/question/priority?*

### Pros and Cons

Write on pieces of paper all the individual pros and cons of a particular decision. Allow individuals or groups to arrange them as they see them under the two headings and speak to them.

Sample questions:

- *Walk and talk me through your pros and con's list for each of these*
- *If you need to make a choice now, which way would you go and why*

Polarity mapping of the two poles and positive and negative sides of these is a form of this exercise.

- *Map the two poles in non value based language*
- *Work out 4 quadrants with positive and negative areas for each pole*
- *Move the group through the four quadrants and discuss the positives and negatives of each pole*

## 3 Levels of Intensity

Using a 1 – 10 scale on the floor, ask members to stand at the point which reflects their feelings, level of emotion, response, commitment, fear, anxiety.

Sample questions:

- *Give me one word which indicates your feelings at this point.*
- *Look at where those who you know and care about in the church are standing. What is this saying to you. Choose a couple of people more impacted than you to pray for.*
- *Walk back 2 steps on the line. What would need to occur for you to move 2 steps in reality to this new level of impact.*

## 4 Simple Yes / No choices

Sometimes polling a group on a simple yes / no option can be a very effective tool. Invite people to choose the option by moving to one side of the room or dividing line.