

**APPENDIX 3: Differences in facilitating small and large (50+ person) meetings**

|   | <b>Smaller meetings</b>  | <b>Large meetings (eg, General Assemblies)</b>   |
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| <b>Affinity</b>   | At least around reasons for being at meeting, perhaps more.  | Often non-existent, may have completely different reasons for being at meeting   |
| <b>Consensus training of group</b>  | Is often assumed, or only done through a brief overview.   | Should start all meetings. Should include both procedures and information on difference between consensus and “traditional” voting.  |
| <b>Participation</b>  | Usually time for everyone to speak several times w/o creating uneven participation.  | Impossible for everyone to speak multiple times without creating unequal participation. Participants must be made to understand this, inform people they will only be allowed to speak a finite # of times.  |
| <b>Addressing inequality and power dynamics</b>                                   | Often best handled by direct discussion, perhaps ongoing work, and/or by facilitator having hands-on management of individuals taking up too much space.   | “Progressive stack” is often used whereby a only a few people are added to stack at a time, prioritizing participants who have not spoken already and who come from historically disenfranchised communities (eg, women, people of color).   |
| <b>Fluidity of process</b>  | Process may be informal, may move organically and back and forth between stages in consensus process, may not even “feel” like stages. May even hop around between agenda items when proposals interact.   | Fluidity in process can readily lead to process breakdown. Best when it’s very clear the difference between consensus stages, eg., “raising concerns” and “amendments addressing concerns”.  |
| <b>Facilitator’s opinions</b>   | Usually may expresses own opinions, but should do so rarely, gently, briefly and without jumping stack.  | Any expression of opinions is highly inadvisable, will certainly create perception of biased facilitation.   |
| <b>Temperature check</b> (aka straw poll, although this term can be misconstrued) | Primarily used for procedural matters (eg, extending time on an item), occasionally used for gauging opinions.   | Frequently used for gauging opinions, and crucially to show participants the degree of agreement. Occasionally used in procedural matter, but may be best to empower facilitation team to make all procedural decisions.   |
| <b>Initiating a proposal</b>  | Often brought to a meeting without warning, although prior notice is appreciated. Frequently only a <i>situation</i> is brought for discussion, no proposal submitted, one is crafted at the meeting itself.   | Strongly recommended to have proposals announced and even briefly discussed and/or have a separate meeting to discuss at previous meeting, except in emergencies. Where no proposal exists, discussion without seeking consensus may be best available option, w/ request for future follow up proposals.                                |
| <b>How proposals evolve</b>   | Facilitator often helps craft consensus proposals through melding of others’ ideas and amendments.   | Facilitation usually avoids suggesting compromises or consolidating or otherwise modifying proposals to avoid perceived bias and micromanagement. Instead must encourage participants to do this.  |
| <b>Consensus model</b>  | Typically uses 100% consensus or “consensus minus one.”  | Often use 90% or 80% consensus as a fall back from 100% consensus. Caution is needed to prevent this from feeling like traditional voting.   |
| <b>Stand asides</b>   | Typically represent someone who does not support proposal but will not leave the group if there is consensus on it. If more than, say, 20% stand aside, this may be a concern.   | Stand asides often represent lack of understanding of proposal – depending on proposal and meeting large #'s of stand asides may or may not be a concern. Can cause confusion when using <100% consensus models as they may or may not be considered part of the %. Useful to differentiate the two types, and to clarify policies here. |
| <b>Techniques for large groups</b>  | Small group break outs with report backs, tag team “fishbowls” when sides are diametrically opposed with a pro, anti, and consensus-oriented participant in a free flowing conversation, consider “spokescouncil” decision making models for all long standing projects, outline what can and cannot be decided in committees or other smaller groups, more hand symbols (eg, for clarifying questions, “wrap it up”), color coded signs..   |  |
| <b>Facilitation team roles unique to very large meetings</b>                      | 1-2 people to “maintain the facilitation bubble.” These people should do in-take on points of process and talk with people who approach the facilitation team rather than using hand signals (as is bound to happen), communicating information to facilitators as appropriate. 1 person displaying visually what is going on, using signs or ideally on a projector (ie, what stage in process, agenda topic, wording of proposal, concerns, amendments, etc.). In VERY large groups, much more sophisticated stack taking is needed – see info on “floor team” in the “Quick guide on group dynamics in people’s assemblies” |  |