

Exercise: Operational planning and control - design a process

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES: PROMOTING LEARNING CIRCLES (Informal/Non formal education)

1

Setting up a Learning Circle

Learning circles can be used for many different purposes, such as learning about the history of a population you serve, policies affecting the work and the life in community, or ideas about how to include social change activities in your daily practice. Normally they are set up in a room, however it is also possible to adapt the principles of the Learning Circle into an outdoor space.

What are the general characteristics of Learning Circles?

- Small, diverse group (8-12 people)
- Meet regularly, for example, once a week over a period of weeks / months
- Set ground rules for a respectful, productive discussion
- Are usually led by a facilitator who is impartial but helps to manage the deliberation process
- Look at an issue from different points of view
- Act as a vehicle to discover, share and express knowledge
- Start where people are and encourages growth
- Involve a spiralling process of reflection and action

4. Management of the learning service provider PDCA in ISO29990:2010

General Steps to Plan and Implement a Learning Circle:

- Before the first meeting
- Running the meetings
- Developing the Learning Circle
- Evaluation
- Dissemination of the product

3.1 Determining learning need	3.2 Design of the learning service	3.3 Provision of Learning service
Before the first meeting	Running the meeting	Developing the Learning Circle
The circle is usually formed following a topic that you prepared beforehand having in mind the issues that are affecting community or organisation. • The topic • The environment of the circle should be one that creates a safe space where either staff or participants may give voice to important issues and concerns. Building support for participation in the learning circle is critical as staff recognise that the learning circle is part of building capacity for social change around important community issues. During the Sessions of the Learning Circle: Some of the steps below only appear during the first session of the learning circle.	Reaching out to communities and selection of participants Tips to reaching out to communities: Practicalities to remember: Number of sessions Environment Duration Schedule Time and Place Resources	During the Sessions of the Learning Circle: Opening of the circle Build the "group agreement" Agree on the topic and learning goals. Defining roles Ask questions and open the circle Conversation open and general Final round

3.4 MONITORING			3.5 EVALUATING
INPUTS	Outcomes or an end product	Criteria and Quality objectives	
Citizenship An increased and proactive attitude to community welfare; Members took part in a community activity that they would otherwise not have contemplated; Members formed new peer relationships with individuals outside their own communities. Economic benefits More effective use of financial resources (cutting waste); Personal Development The promotion of increased social cohesion; Improved feelings of self-worth and esteem; Improved personal communication skills;	An important outcome that helps to create an add value to the learning circle is to have a shared product to presente in the end. This final product could be a public exhibition, a blogue, a printed document, a project report, or documentar. Nevertheless, successful learning circle can achieve another number of outcomes, including but not limited to the following: • Action planning • Affirmation of participants / views • Answering a question • Increasing self-motivation and self-esteem • Building common ground • Collaboration • Decision-making • Fun • Goal setting • Objective achievement • Problem-solving • Recommendations • Relationship	Social Capital Measurement Framework Social participation Civic participation Social networks and social support Reciprocity and trust Views of the local area	The project recognised the importance of evaluation and that the measurement of impact with Learning Circles is not easy. There are some immediately apparent hurdles, for example: • there are no formal learning goals or outputs; • there is no common starting line or place; • there is no common standard against which learning can be formally measured; • the group evolves and in so doing the learning process changes; • the group has its own changing dynamics which interact with those of individual members; • the absence of formal records tends to inhibit a formal evaluative process;

• Augmented self-value and assertiveness; Familial benefits • Cascading benefits to children and family members; Diversity • The opportunity to learn and benefit at first hand from the experiences and beliefs of other cultures.			
---	--	--	--