

World Cafe

(placeholder text)

“The “World Café” is a structured conversational process intended to facilitate open and intimate discussion, and link ideas within a larger group to access the “collective intelligence” or collective wisdom in the room. Participants move between a series of tables where they continue the discussion in response to a set of questions, which are predetermined and focused on the specific goals of each World Café.”

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Caf%C3%A9_%28conversational_process%29

Process

The space should be big enough for the people to move around comfortably. Ideally there would be a central space where the whole group can fit and several breakout-spaces or cafe-tables, big enough for four to five participants each. Each break-out space should be equipped with at least one large sheet of paper and markers (and any other recording or brainstorming materials you'd like to include).

Step 1: Frame the exercise and explain that there will be multiple rounds of conversation (15–20 minutes per round) at different tables. Each round begins with a different question. Different tables (are likely to) have a different topic through which the question can be explored. In between each round the participants are invited to change the tables, in different configurations. Everyone will move except for one participant – the (predefined or volunteered) table moderator who will remain in the same space for all rounds and is responsible for summarising and reporting the conversations.

Step 2: Invite the participants to choose their first table. This can be done random, as ideally they will have a chance to sit at all tables, unless the group is very large and discussing many topics. In this case the choice can be made based on personal preferences, predefined random groups, etc.

Step 3: Begin the first round with a clear question. If the group is small, you can announce the next question. If not, you can have different facilitators brief different groups, or distribute worksheets with the question and instructions.

Step 4: After the time runs out for the first round, ring a bell (or have another clear sonic marker) and invite the participants to move to another table. Remind the moderators that it is their task to summarise the conversation and brief the new group about the key outcomes. Repeat for as many rounds as you have planned.

Step 5: At the end of the last round suggest to the groups that they should summarise all rounds of conversation for each topic and help the moderator prepare their reporting.

Step 6: The whole group gathers together and the table moderators report the conversations. You should guide the reporting to be succinct and focus on answering the core questions.

Step 7: Reflect on the outcomes in a group-wide discussion.

References

- <http://www.theworldcafe.com/method.html>