

Meaningful Participation and Meeting Facilitation

“Meaningful Participation” is not only a core value for Asia Catalyst, but also central to the work of all NGOs. Organizations should create opportunities for all parties – from staff to volunteers and community members – to participate in their work. Before change can be brought to society as a whole, we must first model the changes that we wish to see ourselves, within our own families, communities, and organizations. Asia Catalyst refers to this as the concept that **“human rights begin at home.”** Meaningful participation plays a decisive role in strategic planning and organizational management. Therefore, this first chapter of the *Nonprofit Survival Guide*, focuses on meaningful participation as a foundation for NGOs to work and develop. Further, we recognize that ensuring the meaningful participation of all parties, to a great degree, relies on good meeting facilitation methods. Consequently, this chapter also explains several approaches to facilitating successful meetings. At the end of each chapter in this guide, we close by providing you with a Toolkit – a set of templates and models for use in practice that build on the concepts outlined in the chapter.

How to Understand Meaningful Participation shows that the idea of meaningful participation is widely used for organizations and individuals both throughout history and in the contemporary world to promote social change. Next, **How to Understand the Relationship between Meaningful Participation and Meeting Facilitation** reveals that good meeting facilitators can enhance participation in meetings and vice versa. We go on to compare successful meetings and unsuccessful meetings in **How to Facilitate A Successful Meeting**, and give some examples of how a facilitator can influence the effectiveness of a meeting. You

may want to try out the [Toolkit|5 Practical Tools for Meeting Facilitation](#). [How to Set Meeting Ground Rules](#) will teach you to make behavioral guidelines that are set and followed by all participants at the outset of a meeting. Conflicts are inevitable in meetings, so we outline the “low-to-high” intervention method of conflict resolution in [How to Resolve Conflicts in Meetings](#). This section also includes several conflict scenarios and, for each scenario, a plan for resolving the conflict, for your reference. In [How to Encourage Constructive Discussions](#) and [Toolkit|10 Skills to Facilitate Meeting Discussions](#), you will learn some practical skills for facilitating discussions. The chapter concludes by providing feasible approaches to achieving consensus in meetings in [How to Reach Consensus](#). Finally, as a facilitator, [Template| Meeting Design Sheet](#) can be a useful guide in planning for an upcoming meeting.