

In this tool we share some of the methodologies and approaches PVI has used over 20 years of engaging immigrants and refugees in popular education processes.

Understanding the Context

- People need to understand that they get involve in our work because they want to change things together, for example immigrant people to have voice in policy decisions that impact their lives.
- People need to want to participate because we share guiding principles

Methodologies

- Dinamicas: activities to initiate discussion or symbolize meaning. Technique to generate collective discussion, build relationship
- Dialogue
- Reflection, individual + group
- Comfortable, safe, supportive environment
- Methodologies emerge from context + needs of groups
- Meetings of same culture also meetings across cultures
- Cross cultural planning committees create common ground

Approach

- Ongoing involvement, participation
- Ability to ask critical questions Facilitator/Educator
- Ability to affirm, summarize, lift input, perspectives of group
- Treat as a learning activity not just a conversation
- Free time from talking, spontaneity
- Ability, freedom to change agenda to accommodate the group
- Space for just women, and other certain groups (separate workshops), Latino, other
- Grassroots leaders participate in planning events, gatherings they invite new participants, they are the link
- They participate in the recruitment, relationship building, follow-up, connections, involved community organizers and educators
- We build networks of people
- Action = people voluntarily returning. Claiming this space to continue to learn
- Following gathering with public action, statements (commitment to work, take risks together - to common will)

2½-Day Residential Gatherings

- 2 nights together creates time where participants are not thinking of leaving-exiting 



 **Principles**

- **Knowledge and Problem Solving**
Fundamentally, we have faith in people’s capacity to solve their own problems and guide their individual learning and training
- **Immigrant Leadership**
We value immigrants as thinking beings and encourage the development of new immigrant leadership, including women and youth

 **Tips**

- Resident gatherings offer space and time for selfcare, learning, thinking and creativity.
- If a permanent center is not available, rent venues that have outdoors and meeting rooms that allow space for your own setting.

 **References**

- The Theory behind our work booklet

- Take people away from all their other distractions/obligations
- Takes this long to feel ready to engage, build relationships, etc.
- Time to think, clear head
- Open time to share, get to know one another - if shortened this would be cut out
- Meal times, eating together is valuable time for 1-1 relationships to connect.

Number of People

- 15-20 to provide room for all to participate
- More communications + relationship building
- Number of people that can sit in a circle and hear each other
- Smaller groups allow to understand whole person
- Easier for simultaneous translation
- Each represents a community of people, organization, group

Investment: Translations/interpretations cross-cultural communications: Breaks language and communication barriers, can speak confidently in own languages, own words.

Retreat Space/Settings

- Circles encourages everyone to participate
- Visually encapsulates democracy
- Places where people can walk around outside, breath, room to move, regenerate energy after sitting, thinking for long period
- Permanent center (ideal setting) - association made with a place (history+ connections), people you know, return to each time, library, resource center
- People don't have meeting places and need to get together - need spaces
- People cooking together, working together builds memories of that place, people want to return - anticipate next time
- Room arrangements fast learning / connections
- Allowing family to come, supports both during retreat and builds understanding at home

Everyone Participates

- Skill of facilitator to draw out and acknowledge all contributions
- All forms of contributing/Many ways to participate -Hmong woman singing a song as valuable, as story as vocal people - Helping people participate in their own ways
- Environment that allows all types of sharing ex. - Chants common in some culture
- Room arrangements fosters people connecting
- Encouraging non-literate/less verbal people to draw, visually communicate
- Visually record and keeps up for all to see, reflect on