### Q-Sort activity worksheet

The aim of this activity is to encourage experimentation of collaborative work, negotiation and collective problem-solving. People are presented with several statements about collaboration. All statements are in the form of “collaboration is…”. Statements are designed to be open for discussion. One of the aims of the activity is to put forward the importance of sharing a common language and identifying the fact that citizens with different backgrounds may not spontaneously share a common understanding of what collaboration is. Also, this activity underlines the fact that even though people may seem to disagree on the definitions at first, the issue is in fact to clarify how participants understand words.

Step 1: pre-webinar 1

The Q-set is given to people in the form of a pack of randomly numbered cards, each card containing one of the statements. If you want to make your own set of statements, you need to remember that each statement MUST be subject to interpretation (to identify barriers in collaboration). In the presented Q-SORT activity, all statements are about collaboration.

Individually, people are invited to select 3 statements with which they ‘completely agree’ and 3 with which they ‘completely disagree’ with.

A RULE TO EMPHASIZE: each participant MUST work individually. Step 2 should not be presented before step 1 is completed.

Step 2: webinar 1

The group must find a CONSENSUS on 3 statements they all completely agree with, and 3 statements they totally disagree with.

Each group will have to justify the choice of statements and also explain the processes that took place during this task.

DO NOT TELL THE GROUPS THAT THEY WILL HAVE TO NEGOCIATE, as they will have to come to this conclusion themselves. Sometimes people come to a consensus in the time and other times they do not.

When reflecting on the task the facilitator can discuss:

* If there was agreement or some people put the same statement in opposite categories. How can we explain this?
* Identify differences in representation, language, meaning of words, professional identity, hierarchy, competencies etc.
* Identify that a negotiation process took place, that stakes may have differed between participants, objectives may have differed to, and that negotiation is a solution to reach a common solution.
* Differences highlighted are barriers to work together to overcome and are an important part of the process – do not avoid or ignore these.
* Everyone needs to have an interest in the collaboration, there needs to be a shared problem, issue, question to address. This shared issue needs to be acknowledged by all, as this will promote motivation.
* Common objectives need to be pinpointed, even though the stakes will be different for each institution / participant. This is where the negotiation process takes place, to be able to agree on common goals, and accept other peoples’ reasons to be part of the project. Negotiation is key to take differences into consideration.

**Source:**

Job van Exel (2005). Q methodology: A sneak preview. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228574836_Q_Methodology_A_Sneak_Preview>

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