



Building Deeper Relationships

using Faith-Based Facilitation

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Note regarding Bible references: All Biblical references are from the New Revised Standard Version except where another translation is indicated in brackets.

Note on case studies: The examples in this workbook have been developed from examples of good practice observed in Salvation Army programmes but names, locations and other factors have been changed, adapted and merged.

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Introduction

Learning how to build deeper relationships is important for everyone. Relationships often come under great pressure and can become fragile. Sometimes they break. Relationships with family, friends, neighbours, colleagues can always be better. Relationships can always be deeper.

Faith-Based Facilitation (FBF) is a way of helping people think, talk, explore and respond to their issues in the light of faith. It results in the development of healthier people and communities who enjoy deeper relationships. FBF is not a theory or a project – it is a way of working. It is not a new idea but it needs to be practiced, remembered and implemented. It needs to become a habit.

Giving this process a name and linking it with a set of tools and theological resources will be new for some people. FBF will help you look at every day issues and events more objectively and find ways of responding to particular situations in the light of faith. People can be trained in these relationship-building skills and become faith-based facilitators. They can then form teams (or use the skills in their everyday personal relationships) to improve the relationships in their communities. Such an approach is not separate to normal Salvation Army processes but should become an integral part of its structure and way of working.

What are we doing and why are we doing it?

Facilitation skills have been taught in The Salvation Army for many years. A former international leader of The Salvation Army, Retired General John Gowans, captured the need for Faith-Based Facilitation when he said: ‘We must continually review what we are doing and why we are doing it.’

The process used in Faith-Based Facilitation is similar to other ways of working such as the learning cycle, the business planning cycle and the

project management cycle. This should not be a surprise – people use good processes when learning, doing business or delivering a project. This booklet shows how people of faith can use a similar cycle which includes insights from the Christian faith. Although the FBF process may be new to some, it is very likely they have already used a similar process when confronted by a difficult issue without realising it.

Tip: It is essential for faith-based facilitators to start by appreciating the many assets, gifts and resources that people have in themselves, their families and friends and their community. Even the poorest person has unique gifts and abilities which need to be recognised and affirmed.

The importance of faith

In the past few years there has been increased interest in the difference faith makes in improving the quality of life in communities. Many experts expected the influence of religion in the world to decline in recent years. They have been proved wrong. **Religion is a powerful force in the world today and its influence is increasing.** Therefore, Faith-Based Organisations are being asked to explain the difference faith makes to the way they work. Faith-Based Facilitation can help answer these questions. FBF helps to show why decisions were taken, what actions resulted and helps identify the outcomes.

Although facilitation is used in secular organisations, it does not need to be an entirely secular way of working. Just as music is popular in the secular world, yet is also an important part of Christian worship, so, facilitation can play a vital part in our mission. As this document explains, Faith-Based Facilitation can be compared to the way the Holy Spirit, ‘The Go-Between God’, works in the world. Faith-Based Facilitation helps people to ‘go-between’ each other – deepens relationships, helps people care for others and transforms the world God loves.

Faith-Based Facilitation helps people connect their faith with their actions. People who have a faith in God want to include God in every part of their lives. Those of other faiths have a similar motivation from their own faith-base. This booklet is written from a Christian perspective because The Salvation Army is a Christian Church. However, people who do not subscribe to any particular religious belief system still have compelling beliefs and values that influence the way they make decisions and act. The process and tools used in Faith-Based Facilitation can be read and used by anyone – as long as they are willing to listen to each other and work together for the improvement of the community. This can make them stronger and more effective – particularly in difficult situations. It can be used when interacting: with individuals; in a group of any kind; in a territorial team; in a national or international meeting.



An example of effective Faith-Based Facilitation

Salvation Army officers, Majors Ruth and Andrew, a married couple, took up a new appointment as corps officers. They had been trained in facilitation skills, particularly in good listening, and soon arranged a meeting with other corps members to decide the best way forward.

The people were pleased to be asked for their input and many suggestions were made. Major Andrew, acting as facilitator, summarised all of them. He then asked what might be the best way of finding out what issues concerned people in their community. Group members decided to visit at least 50 families who did not attend the corps. Major Andrew gave these visitors basic training, reminding them to not offer solutions to problems raised and not to promise anything. They just needed to listen, observe and say they would return for another visit.

When the first visits were done, everyone met together to share what they had discovered. Some of those who had been visited were invited to the meeting so their opinions could be heard. At this meeting Major Ruth acted as facilitator. She encouraged everyone to talk about everything they had noticed or been told. They soon had a long list, but a pattern of strengths and needs began to emerge.

The community was blessed with many old people as well as mothers with young babies. Both of these groups of people were mostly staying at home and several people said they felt lonely. A number of retired nurses and school teachers were also living with their families in nearby communities. Many of those visited said they did not have much to do with their time.

Major Ruth asked the group: ‘How can we work together to address these problems?’ Again, as a facilitator, she encouraged everyone to make suggestions. Different people suggested different ideas and these included:

- Meetings for the older people where they could share their stories
- A Bible study for mothers with young children
- Basic health education sessions for both groups run by the retired teachers
- An income-generation activity to help people with low incomes

- Social gatherings where people could share food and sing together
- Visits to other communities.

One of the new corps members, Mary, pointed out that almost all these activities involved community members coming to the corps building. ‘Why do we expect them to come to us?’ she asked. Together, they discussed what they could actually do. Major Andrew gave a brief talk about the way Jesus preached, taught and healed when he was on Earth. Major Andrew explained the importance for Christians to reach out to their community.

After some enthusiastic discussion the group agreed to try three ideas:

1. Mary agreed to organise a regular walk around the community to meet people, make friends and discuss issues of concern. Everyone was welcome on the walk – Salvationists and those not linked with The Salvation Army.
2. A weekly gathering at the Salvation Army hall to which all people over-60’s would be invited. There would be discussion about health issues over a cup of herbal tea, a Bible reading and then a chance to sing and share stories together.
3. A weekly mother-and-baby meeting at the Army hall focusing on health, with input from some retired nurses who had contacts with the nearby government clinic. They would monitor the babies’ growth using scales and charts borrowed from the clinic. Sick children would be referred for treatment as needed. In addition, importantly, there would be a chance for the mothers to sing, pray and share together.

Before the meeting finished with prayer, Majors Ruth and Andrew made sure that people were given the various tasks. Dates were fixed, and all those who had done the initial visiting promised to revisit those they had seen. They would encourage the elderly and the young mothers to attend the new events and bring their friends with them.

The groups were soon well established, and much appreciated by everyone involved. The community walks resulted in invitations to visit people in their homes. The corps members were surprised how much they learnt from these

conversations. They saw things they had missed previously. Because people had been carefully consulted, everyone felt a sense of ownership of the initiatives. In a small way, these new initiatives began to enrich the life of the whole community.

Majors Andrew and Ruth were careful to monitor and evaluate the work of the three groups. They held regular meetings with the leaders and group members reflecting on what they were doing, using the cycle suggested in the Faith-Based Facilitation process (see chapter 1 for an explanation) and a simple self-assessment tool (see chapter 2). This enabled the groups to grow, develop and adapt to changing patterns in the community.

Faith-Based Facilitation (FBF), such as that modelled by Majors Ruth and Andrew, has always taken place when people have worked together and built good relationships. Effective, faithful leaders have always been careful to listen, consult and encourage participation when seeking to respond to the challenges and opportunities around them.



More than ten case-studies showing how Faith-Based Facilitation has been used in practice can be downloaded from www.salvationarmy.org/fbf



Chapter 1:

The Faith-Based Facilitation Process

Faith-Based Facilitation is a process that uses specific tools to help people enjoy deeper, healthier relationships. The FBF process is based on The Pastoral Cycle, which is widely used to help people of faith in their work. This chapter focuses on the FBF process and recommends some tools to help people as they work through the five step cycle. Chapter 2 gives more details on the tools.

It is important to stress that the FBF process involves continuous evaluation. It does not end with 'Step 5' but, like all cycles, continues round again and again.

The 'Action' taken will result in a new situation which then becomes the issue to be examined and evaluated in the next round of the FBF process. And so on!

Step 1: Event or Issue

The FBF process starts when people identify an issue which needs to be reviewed. It might be a significant concern or just a regular pattern of activity that needs to be carefully examined to see 'what we are doing and why we are doing it'. Whatever it is, the event or issue needs to be clearly identified – preferably by a group of people working together.

Recommended Tools for Step 1

Listening skills are crucial in all aspects of FBF (Tool 2.1).

Home visits and community mapping have been proven to be an important way for Salvation Army teams to understand and appreciate the issues (Tools 2.3 and 2.4).

Making time to listen and explore issues with people is strongly recommended at this step (Tools 2.1 and 2.2).

Prioritising (Tool 2.8) will be useful if there are several options and choices to be made.

Tip: Salvation Army facilitation teams have learnt four important things to remember in a home/community visit – Stimulate, Appreciate, Learn and Transfer (SALT). In other words, encourage people to talk (stimulate), listen to and value their perspective and resources (appreciate), learn from their experience, situation and ideas (learn), capture their learning and share it with people in other communities (transfer).

Step 2: Describe and Analyse

The event/issues identified are then described and analysed as fully as possible. Those who are reflecting (together or individually) try to think of every factor that has influenced the issue being explored. This builds a deep and comprehensive understanding of the experience. It is important not to make superficial descriptions of the issues facing a community. Be as objective as possible. Keep carefully to description and analysis and avoid judgments and opinions.

Recommended Tools for Step 2

Identifying strengths and resources (Tool 2.6) An essential starting assumption for a faith-based facilitator is the many assets, gifts and resources that people have in themselves, their families and friends, and their community. Even the poorest person has unique gifts and abilities which need to be recognised and affirmed.

Brainstorming (Tool 2.5) helps to develop a comprehensive description of what is happening.

Community Mapping (Tool 2.4) is a good tool to use on a second visit to a community to gather more information.

Step 3: Reflect and Evaluate

This step of the process involves thinking through the factors that have emerged, and sharing ideas and responses. People of faith find reading the Scriptures, prayer and quiet reflection to be helpful activities between steps 2 and 3. It is at this step that careful evaluation is made, and tough questions need to be asked and answered. For example: How far does this project/activity remain true to its original aims and values? What insights or events or teaching from the Bible connect with this situation? What needs to be changed to make this situation better and of greater value for all concerned? During this time of reflection and evaluation, it may be that a 'Kairos Experience' (see explanation below) emerges. Such experiences cannot be predicted or ordered, but are unlikely to happen unless the

participants are in an open and receptive frame of mind. As well as time for prayer and reflection, taking time out, or engaging in a 'Creative Thinking' (see Tool 2.9) activity may result in greater receptivity. Evaluation and reflection should never be rushed, and certainly never missed out! The major part of the time spent working through the FBF process needs to be spent on this step.

Recommended Tools for Step 3

Exploring (Tool 2.2).

Creative Thinking (Tool 2.9).

The Self Assessment Tool (2.11) is recommended for every group on a regular basis.



Step 4: Decide and Plan

A well-facilitated time of reflection using the FBF process will usually lead to decisions the participants can own and put into practice. If it proves difficult to reach agreement it can be helpful to make a list of all possible options for action. Groups or individuals can then list the positives and negatives of each option. As these are shared in the larger group it may be that agreement will begin to emerge. Sometimes it may be difficult to reach complete agreement in a group for a particular course of action. If this happens it will be necessary for the facilitator to bring the group to a majority decision, seeking as much consensus as possible.

To make sure that the agreed decision is acted upon, it is helpful to ask:

- What resources are available to implement the plan? How will the gaps be filled?
- Who will be responsible for each of the agreed plans and when will they be carried out?
- What training and/or support may be needed?
- What safeguards need to be included?
- How should problems be approached?
- Who needs to be told about the plans and who will let them know?
- When will progress be reviewed?

Recommended Tools:

Identifying Strengths and Resources (Tool 2.6) is an important tool to use at this step to ensure that it will be possible to carry out the decisions that are made.

Prioritising (Tool 2.8) will be helpful in deciding between a number of possible options.



Tip: If resources are required from outside the territory/command, the CPMS system should be used to develop a concept note

Step 5: Action

Translating decisions into action is vital. Remember to list the action points, assess the impact of the action and collect appropriate data. This will be needed during the next cycle step 2 and next cycle step 3.

And then it continues: The FBF process does not stop at the last step, but continues on and on. After Step 5 Action, the changes made will lead to a new cycle:

A new Step 1 Event or Issue:

The action taken resulting from this process will lead to transformation and so there will be a 'new experience' at Step 1.

A new Step 2 Describe and Analyse:

A new description and analysis of the changed situation will be needed. (It is important to do this carefully. You may be surprised to discover how many changes the action has brought about.)

A new Step 3 Reflect and Evaluate:

This is the vital point where the changes brought about by the action can be reflected on and evaluated. It is essential to do this before continuing with any further action. It may be helpful to take a break at this step, to see what impact the action already taken may have in the longer term.

Keeping the faith

Faith-Based Facilitation identifies three important influences that The Salvation Army uses in shaping policy :

1. The Bible,
2. The tradition of the Church;
3. The inspiration of God in the Kairos experience.

The Bible and the Faith Tradition

People of faith are influenced by the teachings handed down across the generations. The Salvation Army, as a Christian Church, believes that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by inspiration of God and that they offer essential, divine guidance that helps people live life to the full.

The Salvation Army does not give the same authority to the tradition of the church as it gives to the Bible. However, we recognise that there is much to learn from the experience and teachings of Christians who have gone before, and therefore the lessons learnt and patterns established by faith tradition should be analysed and reflected upon as they will often provide valuable insight.

Tip: Faith-based facilitators need to be very sensitive to the impact that money can have in this process – especially money that comes from outside the community. External funds will sometimes be needed to 'top up' local resources but care must be taken to ensure that the process is not driven by what the external donor wants. It is strongly recommended that communities get used to using FBF before they link up with external donors. In this way the community will know their own strengths and capacities and have greater confidence to build partnerships with external donors.

'Kairos Experience'

Unexpected ideas can occur at any step of the FBF process but especially during the times of reflection, evaluation and decision. People of faith can often sense God at work in these moments. A 'Kairos Experience' is the term used to describe these occasions.



There is a well known example of a Kairos Experience in Salvation Army history. William Booth, the founder of The Salvation Army said to his wife, Catherine, when he returned home after a meeting in the East End of London: ‘Darling, I have found my destiny.’ He felt God leading him in a particular way. William Booth had a ‘Kairos Experience’.

Much earlier, The Bible records that Peter, the disciple who had been with Jesus for a couple of years, eventually recognised who Jesus was and said: ‘You are the Christ the Son of the living God.’ (Matthew 16:16 NIV). Jesus told many stories about people having unexpected ideas, such as the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) when the young man ‘came to his senses’ (v17) after a number of bad experiences and a long time of reflection. It was a Kairos experience that led to a wonderful reunion with his father.

Kairos is a Greek word that isn’t easy to translate into other languages – it means something like ‘God’s moment’ or ‘the right time’. Such flashes of inspiration may come when we are not actively seeking them. New insight may also happen gradually and not necessarily at a specifically defined ‘moment’. FBF understands these experiences to be the work of God. Christians find the Bible, prayer and times of reflection can stimulate and lead to a Kairos experience.

Kairos experience has been placed at the centre of the diagram to indicate the presence and influence of God in all aspects of life. It reminds people of faith of the importance of always integrating beliefs with actions and the promise that God is always present.

Chapter 2: Tools For Faith-Based Facilitation

The tools described in this chapter help to identify, affirm and encourage the use of these gifts and assets. You will not use all these tools all the time. The skill of an experienced facilitator is the ability to choose the right tool at the right time in the five step process (as explained in Chapter 1). That cannot be learnt in a classroom! You need to practise being a faith-based facilitator.

You probably have some of these skills already – perhaps without realising it. Others can be learnt and practised and developed. There are no rigid rules about when to use which tool. **An effective facilitator needs to be familiar with all the FBF tools in order to be able to choose the right one for each situation.** This is not a complete list of tools. Others can be added if they help people work through the FBF process.

2.1 Listening

Good listening is vital for all Faith-Based Facilitation work, and it is used at every step of the FBF process.

Being properly heard and understood helps people feel valued and cared for, and tells them that they really matter. This is one of the best gifts we can give someone, especially someone who has lost hope. Even if there is very little we can do to help in practical terms, our gift of compassionate listening can soften the pain and suffering.

In addition good listening will save us from making mistakes. When we listen well, we assess problems more accurately and are better able to support those seeking a way forward, rather than only half listening because we are wanting to intervene with our own ideas or perspective.

Even worse, we can find ourselves offering a solution before we have understood the problem. Techniques for good listening may help but on their own they are not enough. Good listening begins in the heart!

Good listening skills include:

Giving the speaker our undivided attention, which is much more easily said than done, especially if there are a lot of people to be listened to and time is limited. It is also difficult in a noisy environment or when we are distracted by other things going on around us. Whatever the difficulties, it is worth making this a high priority.





Showing attention by body posture, and occasional gestures or sounds of encouragement. Show interest in the person speaking - do not interrupt.

Reflecting back what the speaker has just said, often beginning with phrases such as ‘So, as you see it...’ or ‘Can I check that I have fully understood what you are saying?’

Paraphrasing or putting what the speaker has been saying into your own words, beginning with phrases such as, ‘What I think you are saying is...’ or ‘It sounds as if...’ Good use of paraphrase nearly always helps the speaker explore further without the need for questions. (This does work! If you don’t believe it, try it out.) When, as a listener, you ask questions, be sure they are designed to help the speaker clarify or explore what he or she is trying to say. Be careful to avoid questions that require them to say what you want to hear (**See also Tool 2 Exploring**).

Identifying the feelings the speaker has about what they are saying. However, we need to make sure we are noticing and naming the speaker’s feelings, and NOT expressing what we think we would feel if we were in that situation.

Summarising: When the speaker has finished, try to sum up what he or she has said as briefly as possible. This helps the speaker know they have been heard, and it helps the facilitator check they understand what was said. Summarising is very important before moving on to the next tool, Exploring Questions.

Tip: A good facilitator is one who talks little. When the work is done and the aim fulfilled, they will say, ‘We did it ourselves’. (Lau Tzu, 500 BC)

2.2 Exploring Questions

Exploring Questions are particularly useful at Step 2 (Analyse) and Step 3 (Reflect) when using the FBF process.

Exploring an issue with someone, or with a group, naturally follows on from good listening. When everyone who wants to speak has had a chance to do so, the facilitator needs to ask very careful questions to help people think about what they have said. These questions need to be specifically related to the issues, but might begin like these examples:

I couldn’t quite follow the connection between what you said about ** and **. Could you explain this a bit further?

I didn’t completely understand what you were saying about **. Could you say a bit more about it?

When you told me about ** I found myself wondering why...
*[In each case, the ** refers to a specific point the speaker has made.]*

There may be all sorts of feelings and history making it difficult to understand what is happening – even for the people involved – so a wise facilitator will always go slowly and gently when doing so.

It is always helpful to make your exploring or ‘digging deeper’ questions gentle and tentative so you don’t sound as though you are arguing. Here are some examples of helpful questions:

- How did that work out?
- What did people feel when that happened?

The following are examples of unhelpful questions because they close down discussion or push people towards an answer people expect to hear:

- Do your children get sick often?
- You have a lot of problems in your community, don’t you?

It is also important to include questions that explore the role of faith. For example:

- How have people coped with these challenges?
- How are the churches involved in this issue?

Tip: It is especially important at this step for the facilitator to make sure that the voices of the quieter, younger or less confident people, or people new to the team or group, are heard (see Matthew 11.25). They may have special perspectives to offer at all steps of the FBF process, and particularly when decisions are made.

2.3 Community walks and home visits

The best way to build relationships is to go to the people – not wait for them to come to you! This applies to all parts of Salvation Army life – corps, centres and headquarters. **It is highly recommended that this tool is used regularly throughout the FBF process so that we learn more about our communities, understand their concerns, abilities and challenges.**

From its earliest days The Salvation Army has understood the importance of being on the streets and visiting the homes of people.

Once the listening and exploring skills have been explained, it is highly recommended that people walk around the area accompanied by members of the community. On this walk you and the community member must use all your senses to experience all the things around you and talk about them. Praying silently during the walk is also recommended. If invited, visit people in their homes. The team should ask exploring questions when they meet people. The information gathered from this exercise can be followed up with a brainstorm or mapping exercise.

2.4 Community Mapping

The mapping tool is a good way for people to learn about a community and helps members of a community to appreciate what they already have. A team of people should undertake a mapping exercise ensuring that as many different opinions and perspectives are included.

Community members are asked to draw a map of the area. The map can be used to encourage people to talk about their community, its resources, issues and concerns. You will need:

An Organiser – responsible for paper, pens, lime powder etc, ensuring that all team members are present and all members of the team understand the role they have to play.

A Note Taker – responsible for listing age, names and background information of participants and important issues raised and for transferring a map drawn on the ground to paper if needed.

A Facilitator – responsible for introducing the group, explaining the activity and making it clear not to raise expectations. The facilitator conducts the mapping exercise using open and exploring questions, and makes sure that the team allows the community to own the process. The facilitator ensures that no one dominates the mapping process, and, at the end, sums up the exercise and thanks the group for its participation.

Tip: Salvation Army team members in Latin America have found it helpful to focus on the following three questions when talking to people in the community:

1. What are your hopes/dreams?
2. What are your concerns?
3. How does the community see these concerns/hopes? Are they shared by others?

An Assistant Facilitator – assists the facilitator with the mapping exercise and questioning process. For example: ‘What one thing would you like to see change in your community in the next 5 to 10 years?’ and uses ‘digging deeper’ questions to probe more deeply into the issue.

Observers – responsible for noting how the facilitator uses tools and techniques in the mapping exercise (interviewing, questioning etc) and the participation and body language of community members. The observers should also note what goes well and what doesn’t go well about the exercise, and keep track of time.

After the map is completed it is important to debrief and reflect on what has been learnt.

The following questions may be helpful:

- What new insights were gained?
- What did we learn about each other?
- What went well and why?
- What didn’t go well and why?
- How did you start discussion? How do you know if this worked?
- Who started the drawing? Why? And what happened next?
- Did the participants seem interested in the map-drawing exercise? How could you tell?
- Did the facilitator sit back at all? At what point and for how long? What happened during this time?
- Who participated the most in the group and who participated the least? Why?





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- What listening methods did the facilitator use? Were they helpful?
- What questioning methods did the facilitator use? Were they helpful?
- Was the map useful to your discussion and how?
- What could we do better next time?

2.5 Brainstorming

Brainstorming is often used when working through the FBF process, especially at Step 2 (Analyse and Describe) and Step 4 (Decide and Plan). Brainstorming is a very simple tool which can be used by anyone almost anywhere with very little preparation. To do it you need:

- a blackboard, whiteboard or flipchart, or a large sheet of paper;
- someone to write or draw to indicate each different point or suggestion made;
- a facilitator.

First of all the Event or Issue needing attention must be identified (Step 1). Then, at Step 2 the facilitator encourages everyone to talk about anything at all that relates to the issue. These may be thoughts, ideas, past events, customs, images, feelings or other related events. There are no wrong ideas at this step. The writer records them as quickly as possible, while the facilitator encourages people to keep giving suggestions. You can set a time-limit for doing this, or continue until everyone feels satisfied that they have said all they wish to say.

As with all facilitation work, it is important to include and encourage quiet, shy and younger people. However, don't force them to speak. Equally, people who tend to dominate and keep repeating the same point need to be encouraged to listen and allow others to speak. At the end of a brainstorming exercise the facilitator will need to help the group decide what to do with all their ideas. The group will need to agree on aims and objectives. Some of the following tools may help in this process (such as 2.8 Prioritising).

2.6 Identifying Strengths and Resources

This tool is often very useful at Step 4 of the FBF process (Decide and Plan) It is one thing for a group or a community to decide on a course of action or a project they would like to work on, but quite another to assess whether they actually have the resources and abilities, between them, to make it happen. The starting point for Faith-Based Facilitation is the appreciation of the many assets, gifts and resources that people have in themselves, their families and friends, and their community. Every person – rich or poor – has unique gifts and abilities which need to be recognised and affirmed.

Although every person, family and community will have some assets to contribute, they may not have enough. This tool can help to identify existing strengths and resources as well as identify any gaps which may need to be filled with help from outside the community.

An interesting way of approaching this is to divide the group into two.

- Ask Group A to brainstorm the resources and strengths that are within the community or available to them;
- Ask Group B to brainstorm the resources and strengths needed to carry out the suggested course of action.

Then bring them back together to compare the two lists and identify the gaps between ‘what we have’ and ‘what is required’. Finally, everyone can give their ideas for how the items from the ‘missing’ list can be found or alternatives that could be used instead, so that the task agreed can be undertaken. At this point the CPMS system may be helpful in identifying external resources.

2.7 Using the Bible in Faith-Based Facilitation

There are different ways of listening to the wisdom of the Bible in relation to facilitation and reflection on ‘what we do and why we do it’.

a) **Look for biblical themes, images and stories** which relate to the issue or event that has been identified (Step One of FBF process). You will probably need a Bible concordance or index to help find the themes. This approach will take a lot of time but it can lead to unexpected insights and learning.

b) **Brainstorm.** It works well when a group of people identifies a number of the passages from the Bible that relate to the issue or event. Having identified a number of possible passages, agree on one to begin with, and then study it together. This approach can help people see things in new ways as different group members share their responses and spark insights off each other. It is important to encourage the group to choose Bible passages that will challenge them, not just ones that reinforce what they already believe. Remember the Holy Spirit is sometimes a ‘disturber’ as well as a ‘comforter’.

c) **Learn by using ‘given’ passages.** Sometimes fresh insight and understanding of an Event or Issue can come by focusing on a particular passage. Or, if you are reading your way through a particular book of the Bible you could take that day’s chapter and see if there are truths that are particularly relevant to the situation. Or you could respond in the same way to a passage ‘given’ to you through a sermon or a Bible study at church. Diligence and honesty in responding to the questions raised by verses of the Bible are, of course, key to the value of the exercise.

d) **Bible passages helpful as a background for facilitation work.** Please do not restrict your Bible study, in relation to facilitation, to the passages and verses suggested below. However the following selection may be helpful:



Deuteronomy 10:12-20; Love of God includes love for widows, orphans and strangers

Ruth; Read the whole book

1 Samuel 16:7; The Lord looks on the heart

2 Samuel 12:1-13; David's misuse of power for his own ends, and his recognition and admission of wrong

Jeremiah 1:10; Tear down and plant

Isaiah 61:1-4; Good news for the oppressed; the repair of ruined cities and the devastations of many generations

Ezekiel 37:1-11; The spirit of God gives new bodies and breathes new life into what was previously just a valley of dry bones

Hosea 1-3; Hosea's commitment to his wife in spite of her unfaithfulness is compared with God's continuing love for his people, even when they have forsaken him or disobeyed him

Matthew 4:1-11; Jesus' temptations in the wilderness

Mark 6: 30-44 and Luke 9:10-17; Compare these two accounts of the feeding of the five thousand

Luke 5:12-16; Jesus heals a person affected by leprosy

Luke 8: 42-48; Healing of the 'unclean' woman with a haemorrhage

Luke 15:1-7; Jesus' love of the lost and the rejected

Luke 18:9-14; Pharisee and sinner

John 4:1-26; The Samaritan woman at the well

John 8:1-11; The woman caught in adultery

John 9:1-5; Jesus heals a man blind from birth (infirmity and sin?)

Colossians 3:3; Life hidden with Christ in God

1 Timothy 3:1-13; Qualities expected of leaders

James 2:1-13; What it really means to love your neighbour

1 Peter 3:4; A gentle and quiet spirit

1 Peter 4:13; Sharing the sufferings of Christ

2.8 Prioritising

This tool is helpful if there are several issues needing attention at Event or Issue (Step 1). It is also useful at Step 4 (Decide and Plan) to help choose options for action from a number of possibilities.

Having identified a number of changes or improvements that need to be

made, the group or community representatives will need to decide, with the limited resources available, which suggestions to work on and in what order. After a 'brainstorming' exercise there may be as many as 30 ideas but the group will need to identify three or four to begin with. A simple but satisfactory way to enable a group to agree on priorities works like this:

- Suggestions are listed carefully, each being indicated by a word, phrase or picture.
- The facilitator makes sure everyone understands what each represents.
- The word, phrase or picture for each suggestion is written or drawn on a separate piece of paper. These are then put in different places around the space available.
- Everyone is given an equal number of pebbles, beans or counters.
- Each person places a certain number of pebbles etc by each suggestion, to indicate the priority they would give it. For example, if it is very important to them they can put down 5 pebbles. If it is not important in their opinion they can give it one pebble or none.
- When everyone has finished, the pebbles, etc for each suggestion are counted. The more pebbles a suggestion has, the important the group thinks it is.
- The results are then discussed with the facilitator's help.

2.9 Creative Thinking

This tool is often helpful at Step 3 – Reflect and Evaluate. It can also be used at any step in the process when there are problems or things feel a bit stuck. People think in different ways. For some people 'creative thinking' comes more easily than thinking in words and everyone benefits from trying more creative approaches from time to time. This is especially true when being reflective and seeking to be open and receptive as at Step 3 in the FBF process.

Encouraging people to draw or act out their responses to particular situations or suggestions, or to make music or drama together to express



their feelings, can be helpful part-way through any facilitation exercise. This makes the work fun and gives participants a break from discussion. After such a period of creative activity, and perhaps a time of prayer and sharing, new thoughts and ideas may occur. In particular, connections between themes and passages from the Bible may come to mind and make an important contribution to the process of evaluation and reflection.

2.10 Problem Solving Tool

This tool may be useful at any step if people stop participating in the process or if there are differences of opinion. Working through the Steps of the FBF process with a good facilitator is usually enjoyable and worthwhile. Sometimes though, when participants are tired or stressed, they may have difficulty staying with the process of evaluation and



reflection and become impatient for action. At other stages people may lose interest and begin to think about other things. If this happens, it may help for the facilitator to:

- Outline what the problem seems to be and what may be causing it (keeping to issues rather than blaming anyone).
- Ask people why they think there is a problem (staying with issues and avoiding blame).
- Invite group members with strong differences of opinion to change places with each other and then to state the other person's opinion or belief as honestly and accurately as possible. This will help them to 'stand in each others' shoes'. After this has been done, invite comments on how this felt for those taking part.
- Suggest having a break and spending a set amount of time on a creative activity together before returning to the present task.
- Invite suggestions for ground rules to be agreed on to assist in completing the task.
- Seek agreement for a timetable for completing the task

Tip: If an external donor has been involved there may be other evaluation tools to be used. However it is strongly recommended that the self assessment tool is also used as it will involve all group members in a discussion as to how their task is progressing. This will increase their personal ownership and input into the work.

2.11 Self Assessment Tool

Self-assessment helps the group see whether they are making progress in meeting their aims and objectives. This simple tool has been very helpful among many different Salvation Army groups.

During the group meeting use the brainstorming tool (2.5) to agree on the aims and objectives which the group wishes to be assessed against. For example, if it was a youth group undertaking self-assessment they might include factors such as the number of people attending; the range of activities on offer, the quality of the food available; time for prayer; the number of new people invited; the number of people discussing concerns with the leader.

Use a large sheet of paper (flipchart size) and draw the two lines of a graph (usually called X and Y axes). On the Y axis (vertical) write numbers 0,1,2,3,4,5 in ascending order. Leave the X axis (the line going across) empty until the group meeting. Having agreed on the factors to be assessed, the group now discusses the ranking to be given to each one, from 0 = extremely disappointing through to 5 = best effort. After completing the rankings, group members plot this on the graph and then discuss what can be done to improve the factors which are weak.



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Faith-Based Facilitation? Faith-Based Facilitation (FBF) is a process and a set of tools that help people to think, talk, explore and respond to their issues in the light of faith. It results in the development of healthier people and communities. FBF uses a process of theological reflection enriched by tools from the social sciences.

2. Why does The Salvation Army use Faith-Based Facilitation?

The Salvation Army believes faith is an essential dimension in the development of healthy people and communities. Faith does not limit The Salvation Army's ability, as described in its mission statement to 'meet human needs without discrimination'; rather, faith in God the Father, Son and Spirit is the source of all Salvation Army mission. However, faith dimensions need to be handled with wisdom and care particularly in multi-faith societies. FBF offers a process and a set of tools to assist in this task. This approach is consistent with foundational Salvation Army teaching including the Doctrines, Orders and Regulations and Official Minutes.

3. Is Faith-Based Facilitation only for Salvationists? No, it can be used by many people. The Salvation Army believes the Christian gospel can transform every part of life (body, mind and soul) and can be experienced by everyone, everywhere. The mission of The Salvation Army is to live out and share the whole gospel for the whole person for the whole world. Faith-Based Facilitation helps this transformation to take place. Using the FBF process and tools can create opportunities for people with different faiths and worldviews to work together. This results in deeper relationships, healthier people and more capable communities.

4. How can Faith-Based Facilitation be applied? This is not a 'project' or a 'programme' but rather a way of working that is encouraged across The Salvation Army. It can be used in all parts of The Salvation Army



including community development, social work, health, evangelism, emergency services, administrative decisions, counselling, etc. The FBF process and tools are helpful when engaging in caring, learning, planning and solving activities.

5. Who can use Faith-Based Facilitation?

- Individuals can use the FBF process and tools to think through issues and challenges on their own (however most of the tools are best used in a group setting).
- A group working together in a community can use FBF in everyday activities, particularly in caring, learning, planning, solving and advocacy activities.
- An external team – a group of people can join with a community and develop relationships using Faith-Based Facilitation to share and learn.

6. What are the principles underpinning Faith-Based Facilitation? Five key principles have been identified as foundational attitudes for people using FBF:

Community - Salvationists believe every person is made in the image of God. Faith-based facilitation helps to build deeper relationships with all people - particularly poor and marginalised people who live in our neighbourhood. Transformation of people and society is the calling of all Christians and FBF helps people better participate in God's mission in the world.

Grace – God is not confined to holy places like churches or temples. People of faith are required to connect into their communities, developing relationships with as many people as possible because God's grace is for everyone and is everywhere.

Hope – Faith-based facilitators believe in the possibility of transformation towards a better world today as well as hope for eternity.

Care – Faith-based facilitators seek to stand side by side with people. The result is people seeking genuinely to engage with situations and suffering without seeking to manipulate people for other agendas.

Change – Faith-based facilitators believe every person deserves a better quality of life. Therefore, changes in economic, physical and educational circumstances should be measured and monitored. A key outcome of FBF is improved spiritual and relational health. The apostle Paul listed the characteristics of godly, healthy people: 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control' (Galatians 5:22-23).

7. How long does it take to complete the FBF process? It takes as long as necessary. Skilled facilitators learn when to move to the next step but most often people need much time to work through the four stages leading to step 5 – action. That is a good thing – relationships take time to deepen and people need time to process the information that emerges through the FBF process. Don't rush!

8. Is this a new idea? No. Throughout human history people of faith have found ways of integrating their beliefs with their actions. Salvationists have taken this task particularly seriously. FBF builds on the work done by The Salvation Army in recent years in areas such as integrated mission, community development tools, community counselling, servant leadership, SALT, psycho-social counselling, etc. The FBF process complements and strengthens many of these existing approaches. FBF offers specific processes and tools which need to be thoroughly learnt so they become intentional habits. This is a new approach for many people.

9. How does FBF link to the CPMS system? The CPMS system is The Salvation Army's tool for managing and supporting community projects which receive international support. FBF is a way of working used by The Salvation Army in all aspects of its ministry. Occasionally, at step 4 of the FBF process, a resource gap may be identified relating to an issue of concern in a community. In this situation, the CPMS system could be used to access external resources thereby enabling the community to achieve their vision. Information and insights gathered during the FBF process should be used in the preparation of CPMS system concept notes and project proposals.

10. Where can I get more information? Additional case studies and tools are continually being developed. Resources approved by the IHQ Programme Resources Department can be downloaded from www.salvationarmy.org/fbf

The background of the entire page is a close-up, artistic photograph of several hands reaching upwards. The hands are of various skin tones, and the lighting creates strong shadows and highlights, giving it a dramatic, almost spiritual feel. The hands are spread out, with fingers pointing towards the top of the frame.

AN EFFECTIVE FAITH BASED FACILITATOR

- Shows interest in everyone
- Listens carefully
- Encourages participation
- Is well prepared
- Shows respect for others' views
- Is patient
- Is flexible
- Is open minded
- Motivates others
- Uses a variety of tools and approaches
- Keeps the process in place without controlling the outcome
- Admits and learns from mistakes
- Has an ear for Kairos experiences
- Encourages people to explore Bible stories

A LESS EFFECTIVE FAITH BASED FACILITATOR

- Likes to be in control
- Demands answers
- Hurries things along
- Judges
- Is insensitive
- Talks a lot
- Forces his/her opinions on others
- Thinks s/he knows best
- Has a fixed plan
- Gives most attention to the loudest people
- Ignores quiet people
- Sticks rigidly to a time table
- Is anxious about using faith resources