



## *Friends Responses to Global Change*

### **The Cluster Process: A Guideline for Participants**

#### **An FWCC Worldwide Consultation among Friends**

## **1. THE CLUSTER PROCESS**

### **A. What is a Cluster Gathering?**

Cluster gatherings are the first step for Friends to participate in the worldwide Consultation process. Clusters are a face-to-face meeting where Friends meet for a process of discernment with prayer, listening and sharing of stories and experiences around the theme of global change. Initiative and invitations come from local Meetings or Friends Churches or from facilitators. FWCC provides materials and support for the hosts, facilitators and recorders of the Clusters. FWCC volunteers under the direction of the Global Change Steering Committee and Global Change Coordinator, will follow-up on the recordings of the clusters, allowing us to integrate these voices, experiences, and the stories into the Consultation process.

We hope that as Friends hear one another's hopes, fears, and leadings, individuals, Friends meetings and churches will spontaneously build networks to share their concerns and to jointly take action locally, regionally and internationally.

### **B. Organizing a Cluster Gathering**

Any local or regional group of concerned Friends, Friends meetings or churches, may organize a cluster. There is no limit placed on the number of clusters to be held in any region or local community. We expect and encourage clusters to be formed in the manner and traditions of local Friends communities, which vary around the world. Small cluster gatherings may support the opportunity for each voice to be heard. Larger cluster gatherings may build unity and fellowship among Friends in geographic regions. While formats for clusters reflect local customs and traditions among Friends, we ask for a worldwide and shared commitment from local clusters to participate in follow-up processes designed to bring local voices, experiences and stories together into the 2011 Consultation

### **C. Preparing for the Cluster Gathering**

The structure of cluster meetings is that each cluster has its own clerk, facilitator or convener who convenes the gathering and ensures it stays focused. The clerk may also keep written records or Minutes of the meeting. Alternatively, there may be a separate recording clerk or recorder to keep written records. We hope that you will also have a recorder who will make an audio-visual record of the Cluster's proceedings. Cluster gatherings might be hosted in local Meeting houses, Friends churches, or in a home, or they might be larger meetings. Cluster meetings are best held in a quiet environment that supports prayer and reflection, and can accommodate the anticipated number of participants. Six *Queries on Global Change* form the backbone of each cluster. In inviting the participation of Friends in the clusters, we encourage extending a special invitation to new voices and perspectives, to invite Friends of all ages and backgrounds, and to support those with limited resources who may otherwise be unable to participate.

## **D. Agenda for the Cluster Gathering**

The agenda for the cluster gathering is brought forward by the facilitator and agreed to by the cluster meeting as a body in accordance with the traditions of local Friends communities. The participants also agree together on the length of time to be spent together. We anticipate cluster gatherings may be a half-day or a full day or a two-day process depending on the traditions and needs of each community. We suggest the cluster be held as a *Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Global Change* and that it open and close with a time of worship that allows for prayer and reflection. We encourage participants to speak briefly about their personal experience of global change. After this sharing, and an additional time for prayer and silence to hold the individual shared stories, the cluster considers as many of the six *Queries on Global Change* as time permits. The group may then want to consider how the changes that they have personally experienced are interconnected with those changes experienced by other Friends around the world.

## **E. Process for the Cluster Gathering**

We view the cluster gathering as a time of worshipful discernment, set aside for listening to each other, and listening for God's leading. Participants prepare for the process by reflecting on the queries and accompanying reading materials in advance of the gathering. This is a time for speaking out of prayer and from the heart, sharing our stories and our deep convictions.

Resource materials and background information are available on the website for everyone.

The recorder documents in writing individual stories of experience of global change, as well as the cluster's response to each of the queries. We ask recorders to note by numbers which of the six queries participants are responding to. FWCC hopes video recording technology will be available to each cluster gathering. Video clips of stories and responses may then be shared on the website. Participants sign into the cluster gathering, and in that process give permission for a written and video record of the process to be made, edited, published and shared as part of the Consultation.

## **F. Follow-up to the Cluster Gathering**

Following the cluster gathering, the facilitator and recorder shall send the FWCC Global Change project the following material: 1. record of participants, including contact information and consent to share images and recordings from the meeting. 2. Recorder's notes of the meeting. 3. The video record of the meeting. 4. The facilitator's notes on the cluster gathering process and outcomes. The FWCC Global Change Steering Committee has a group of volunteers to compile and edit these materials for inclusion in a web-based "open space" forum for additional reflection and dialogue among Friends. This will appear at [www.fwccglobalchange.org](http://www.fwccglobalchange.org).

## **2. CLUSTER INTEGRATION AND DEEPENING**

Following the Cluster Gatherings, it is FWCC's challenge to hear everyone's message, to seek the truth through discernment and in so doing so to find a compassionate and appropriate balance of perspectives and experiences. This is a time for cluster participants and Friends everywhere to listen to each other. The experiences and perspectives of Friends in local and regional meetings are 'seasoned' through a gathering, listening, and sifting process. We collate responses by queries, and also look at responses as a whole. Volunteers from around the world will assist the Listening Committee of the FWCC Steering Committee in this process. As it progresses, we will share this work in an on-line collaborative space in both visual and written form.

### **3. FALL 2011 CONSULTATION**

As we move toward the 2011 Consultation, those facilitating the Cluster integration and deepening process will work with members of the four Sections to ensure that in sifting through materials from clusters, the diversity of voices, regions, and traditions in each Section are included.

We will discern whether an outcome of the Consultation may be a distinctive and shared Quaker voice on Global Change. We see this as a response not only to environmental change, but also encompassing the changes related to the economy, society, migration, agriculture, and how we live in the near future and beyond. What do we, as a worldwide body, have to say to ourselves and to the world? What actions might we jointly wish to encourage or directly undertake? How do we articulate the spiritual basis for this response? As we move toward the Consultation, we expect the Consultation to craft a document similar to the epistles of early Friends, which offers our best understanding of what God is asking of us in these times.

### **4. SIXTH WORLD CONFERENCE OF FRIENDS, August 2012, Kenya**

The Consultation on Global Change will report at the 2012 World Gathering of Friends in Kenya. The report will be the discerned outcome of the Friends Consultation process and may guide Friends on what our future role is on the environmental, economic and social challenges we face.

### **WAYS YOU CAN PARTICIPATE**

We invite you to participate as individual Friends and as local and regional Friends Meetings and Churches. We seek responses to the six Queries from groups of Friends everywhere. This may include your sharing with us the ways in which you have already been engaged as Friends in discernment and action in response to global change. We invite you to join in this process as a host, facilitator, recorder, or participant in a locally sponsored cluster gathering using materials and resources made available through FWCC. If it is your leading, you may consider volunteering to support the work of the Listening Committee in organizing and disseminating outcomes of clusters.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The FWCC Global Change Steering Committee is comprised of an international group of volunteers who have worked together in a discernment and planning process for over a year. We invite your response, support, and suggestions as we refine this process and move forward. We especially encourage the voices of Friends who are new to FWCC. This goes beyond a conversation. It is a process of discernment, and our collective experiences will inform our way forward.

To get involved, please contact Samuel Mahaffy, the Coordinator for the FWCC Global Change Consultation, by post at the address below or at [samuel@fwccglobalchange.org](mailto:samuel@fwccglobalchange.org). Our website [www.fwccglobalchange.org](http://www.fwccglobalchange.org) has further information and is updated regularly as the Consultation moves forward.

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