



## *Friends Responses to Global Change*

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

#### **IN THE WORLD CONSULTATION PROCESS An FWCC Worldwide Consultation among Friends**

## **1. INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We send this information because you expressed interest in-serving-as a facilitator of a Cluster Gathering. Cluster Gatherings are the first step in the FWCC Worldwide Consultation among Friends in response to Global Change. They are a *Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Global Change*. Your service as a facilitator will help your local or regional group to participate in the discernment process.

This packet provides basic tools that support you in your role and build on your experience in facilitation. The material serves as guidance and support. Your role as a facilitator and the needs of the group will be guided by your local needs and traditions as well as connecting with Friends around the world.

We gratefully acknowledge the important groundwork laid by Friends who have journeyed before us. 1. The Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre who developed a packet titled “Hearts and Minds Prepared: Grounding the Faith and Practice of Quakers today. That work is copyrighted by the Centre in 2003 and information can be obtained from them by writing to Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, 1046 Bristol Road, Birmingham, B29 6U. 2. This packet included “Ways of Working in Groups” adapted from *Sharing in Worship, Friends World Committee for Consultation, revised edition 2003*. 3. The Steering Committee of the FWCC Global Change Worldwide Consultation has been engaged in a discernment and learning process for more than a year. This process is ongoing. We value your input and feedback on the materials by e-mail to [info@fwccglobalchange.org](mailto:info@fwccglobalchange.org).

## **2. THE ROLE OF FACILITATORS**

The primary role of a Facilitator is to serve as the Clerk of the Cluster, to organise the Cluster Meeting(s), ensure the Cluster Meetings are conducted in the worshipful manner of Friends, and possibly to record Minutes or take notes of the proceedings. You may want someone else to keep the records of the Meeting. You may be the only facilitator of your cluster gathering, or you may work with a co-facilitator. In any event, you never work alone! While you support, guide, and lead the process, the group as a whole shares responsibility for the process and its outcomes. Leading a group of capable Friends, we encourage you - when necessary - to stop and ask for the help and cooperation of the group as a whole in supporting good process. It may be helpful to have a brief conversation at the beginning of the meeting about your role as a facilitator and establish shared understanding of the group’s responsibility for the process. The gathering may include both seasoned Friends and newcomers. The Consultation encourages the participation of newcomers, and as the facilitator, we support your attentiveness to welcoming and supporting their participation.

Your most essential role as a facilitator of a cluster gathering is to support a process that is safe. A safe process allows all participants to share in a respectful manner, without any one or two people (including the facilitators) dominating the group. Safety is deepened in group process when 1. Individuals speak from their own experience and do not speak for others. 2. The group allows for silence between speakers and ‘holding’ of the thoughts of each speaker. 3. No one feels forced or pressured into speaking. 4. Each person has an opportunity to speak; 5. Everything shared in the group is confidential, except as the group agrees as a whole to share their process in the context of the larger Consultation among Friends.

### 3. PREPARING FOR A CLUSTER GATHERING

There are important steps for facilitators to take in advance to prepare for a cluster gathering. These include the following:

**A. Invitation:** It is important that the host meeting or church share invitations well in advance of the cluster gathering. The host Meeting or Church will know the best way to “get the word out”. This may include announcements at Meetings for Worship or Business, newsletters, posters, personal contact, or invitations sent out by e-mail, fax, or post. A sample invitation flier for a cluster gathering is available on request from the FWCC Global Change Coordinator.

**B. Participant Preparation:** *Six Queries on Global Change* form the backbone of the Consultation process. It is helpful to distribute these in advance of the meeting to allow Friends the opportunity for reflection. They are available on our website: [www.fwccglobalchange.org](http://www.fwccglobalchange.org). Facilitators may also wish to share Minutes from Friends around the world in regard to global change. These are also available on our website.

**C. Facilitator Preparation:** Arranging practical details in advance of the cluster helps to ensure a gathering where Friends feel comfortable and able to focus on the task at hand. The space for the gathering is important. It needs to be conducive to both worship and information sharing free of unnecessary distractions and noise. Reviewing the cluster process and background information, with your co-facilitator if you have one, is helpful preparation. We anticipate that the facilitator’s role will be a rich experience for you, and that you will be learning as both a facilitator and participant in the process. The purpose of the cluster gathering is to create a reflective and prayerful context in which Friends can listen for God’s leading about Global Change and seek guidance on a response. Time spent in prayer and reflection by the facilitators and the Cluster as a group can support this purpose.

**D. Recorder:** If the Facilitator is not taking notes, records and minutes of the Cluster process and outcomes then a Friend should be invited and appointed to do this. The Recorder, as we name the friend who takes notes and records of the Cluster Meeting, may consider making a video and or audio record of the Meeting as well as taking written notes and compiling Minutes of the Meeting. If video as well as written and or audio records are made it may be necessary to have two Recorders, one to take the video record and the other to take written notes and discern Minutes. Any Minutes made of the Meeting shall be agreed to by all participants in the Meeting in the manner of Friends.

### 4. 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 face-to-face meetings for Friends to engage in 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 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 leadings, hopes, and fears, individuals, Friends Meetings and Friends Churches will spontaneously build networks to share their concerns and to ~~jointly~~ take action jointly locally, regionally and internationally.

#### B. Agenda for the Cluster Gathering

The agenda for the Cluster Gathering is brought forward by the Facilitator and shared with the cluster meeting as a body in accordance with the Meeting traditions of local Friends communities. The cluster also agrees together on the length of time you will spend together. We anticipate Cluster Gatherings may be a half-day or a full day or a two or more 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 begin and end 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 and reflect on the individual shared stories, the Clusters consider 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.

### **Sample Agenda for a Cluster Gathering \***

- 1) Friends encouraged to sign-in and find a name tag in the manner of local custom.**
- 2) Ensure all Friends participating in the Cluster understand in advance and are reminded before the Cluster starts its formal proceedings that their contribution may be edited and published as part of the Consultation process.**
- 3) Ensure that the sign-in form includes a notice that the proceedings, including notes and records of them may be recorded, used, edited, and published on-line and or in print form as part of the Consultation process.**
- 4) Friends gather in an open circle or shared space that allows for face-to-face interaction.**
- 5) Welcome from the facilitator and brief introduction of the Cluster process by the Facilitator, introductions, including introduction of the Recorder (if the facilitator is not the Recorder), a very brief overview of the background of the Consultation, and agreement on the process and time commitment for this meeting.**
- 6) Opening time for worship.**
- 7) Friends share briefly their personal experience of Global Change. The stories that are called forward are guided by the six Queries, which set a context for this sharing.**
- 8) A brief period of prayer and silence to hold and reflect on the individual shared stories.**
- 9) The group considers as many of the six *Queries on Global Change* as possible.**
- 10) Friends may want to consider how their personal stories and experiences are interconnected with the group's discernment in reflection on the Queries.**
- 11) Closing discussion. Make sure all Friends names are on the sign-in sheet and Friends understand how the information from this gathering becomes part of a larger Consultation process.**
- 12) Closing time for worship.**

**\* A cluster gathering may be a half-day or longer process with this agenda. Friends wishing more time for worship and reflection and consideration of all six Queries may plan for a gathering that is longer. We encourage facilitators of longer gatherings to remember the importance of appropriately placed breaks, for example that keep any segment of the meeting to two hours or less.**

### **C. 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 to 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.

The recorder documents in writing individual stories of experience of global change, as well as participant's responses to each of the queries. It would be helpful to ask speakers to identify which

query they are responding to, knowing that a response may be in regard to more than one query. We ask recorders to reference responses by the number of the query. 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.

## **5. FOLLOW-UP TO THE CLUSTER**

As facilitator(s) there are some important tasks in follow-up to a cluster gathering. First, we encourage you to take some time after each session to reflect together as a group and or with your co-facilitator, as to what went well for you and the group, and what went less well. What might be done differently in the future to improve the cluster process?

As has hopefully been done at the beginning of the cluster gathering, it is helpful to remind participants at the close of the gathering that their gathering is a part of a much larger and worldwide consultation process. Remind participants that 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 Friends everywhere to listen to each other. The experiences and perspectives of Friends in local and regional Gatherings are 'seasoned' through a gathering, listening, and sifting process. 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. Invite cluster participants to regularly visit the FWCC Global Change website to follow the discernment process as it progresses from the local and regional level to the World Consultation to be held in late 2011 and then to the Friends World Conference in Kenya in 2012.

Following the Cluster Gathering, the Facilitator (with the help of the Recorder) is asked to send the FWCC Global Change project the following material: 1. record of participants, including contact information and consent to share the records of the meeting including any video or audio recordings (Sample Sign-in sheet attached). 2. Recorder's notes of the meeting. 3. The video and or audio recording of the meeting. 4. Facilitator's notes, reflections, and thoughts on the Cluster Gathering process and outcomes. We attach a Facilitator's Feedback Form, and ask that this be filled out immediately after the Gathering, and returned to the FWCC Global Change Coordinator as soon as possible

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The FWCC Global Change Steering Committee and the Global Change Coordinator are available to answer questions you may have, and refer you to additional resources. We also invite you to share with us your thoughts and reflections on the cluster process and your experience of the process as both a facilitator and participant. The website ([www.fwccglobalchange.org](http://www.fwccglobalchange.org)) has further information on how to contact us, and stay engaged in the Consultation after the cluster gathering.

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