



SHAPING WISDOM TOOL

Wisdom in...Wisdom Shared...Wisdom Out

This **Shaping Wisdom Tool** is an engagement methodology that is recommended for the *Unveiling Youth Potential* program. Use these steps as much as possible in the process of engagement with youth. The goal is for **wisdom** to be shared and incorporated into a **process** that triggers a **commitment**. And always, recognize the fragility of pursuing wisdom, working with youth...and leading change!

Wisdom In: “Prime the pump” - stimulate youth thinking and imagination - by introducing ideas, analysis, observations, and experiences to the group. This can be achieved in many ways, for example:

- Asking a Bridges’ learning coach to share some research on Aboriginal or Muslim youth statistics (e.g. barriers to change, or opportunities);
- Inviting an Aboriginal or tribal artist to share community wisdom/experience;
- Inviting a youth leader to share their experience (from the youth network or from the community);
- Inviting an entrepreneur to share their story, etc.

Adopt an image or metaphor that works for this culture or community. Prime the pump works with farmers. What works with Aboriginal communities (e.g. talking stick, feather); Yemeni communities or Indian communities? Let the youth identify their own image of wisdom...enliven the engagement by the appropriate use of cultural symbols and metaphors.

Wisdom Shared: Methodologies used to engage with the youth in a community can be adapted and tailored for the need and the participants. They may include:

- Combining small group dialogue with flipcharts; then look for patterns and assimilate into a shared map for the group, a Living Map;
- Use questions to get groups started;
- Use facilitated small group discussion with a presentation to the larger group;
- Capture the data (written recording, shared image, video);
- After the pump is primed, focus on what to do with the information/wisdom...how to integrate it into something that is actionable? THIS INTEGRATION IS CRITICAL!
- Analyze the collected data (look for patterns, discernment, need for next dialogue on key questions);
- Make sure that people feel that their voices are documented (e.g. written down and recorded, videotaped)...they need to see it, and so do others;
- Link to personal wisdom stories;

- Use youth activities but remember, we're not here to entertain; we are here to feed these youth ideas, inspiration, good thinking; feeding their innermost desire to do good and find meaning;
- Be creative and tactile. For example, use trinkets to create stories in a sand bowl (beads, strings, branches, wooden books, buttons);
- Use small group work, but switch partners;
- Use stickies to share priorities and start patterning;
- Pick appropriate community locations for meetings;
- Have fun;
- Don't feed victim thinking; and
- Enable appropriate gender mix.

Wisdom Out: We need commitments!

- Agree on, and document commitments to action (e.g. individuals identify target project for the community; undertaking to develop a business plan etc.)
- Check in on alignment to partnering principles:
 - Shared learning?
 - Integration? Applying learning/strategy to action/operations?
 - Link to My Wisdom stories?
- Tangible steps identified, dates targeted, and the consequences for failure to act agreed.