

KNOWLEDGE SHARING MEETING

January 27-28, 2016
Washington, DC

STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS: INQUIRY, INNOVATION, & IMPLEMENTATION

PRESENTER INSTRUCTIONS & GUIDANCE

Thank you for agreeing to present at the TOPS/FSN Network Knowledge Sharing Meeting. We look forward to working with you and to having a successful Conference! The information below is to help you prepare your session! Please review and let your session point person know if you have any questions!

General Conference Information

Date: Wednesday, January 27 – Thursday, January 28, 2016 – Your specific session date and time will be confirmed by your point person!

Location: Renaissance Downtown Washington, DC Hotel, 999 Ninth Street NW, Washington, DC [[Map](#)]

Transportation: The Renaissance is accessible via car, taxi, and public transportation. It is also convenient to local airports and bus/train stations. Learn more [here](#).

Accommodations: The Renaissance Hotel has reserved a limited number of rooms for our guests at a discounted price. Please use this link (<https://resweb.passkey.com/go/TOPSFNSN>) to reserve a room for the meeting.

Materials provided for your session: Your presentation room will be equipped with a laptop, projector, flipcharts, and plenty of markers, index cards, post-its, etc.

What We Need From You!

Register:

Please complete your online registration at your earliest convenience: www.regonline.com/ksm2016

Send these items no later than Wednesday, January 6 to your point person/people:

- Organization and Job Title**, to ensure proper information, spelling
- Biography:** no more than 175 words
- Twitter Handle:** if you have a Twitter account
- Photo:** JPG file, at least 300 dpi
- AV needs or special requests:** beyond provided materials listed above
- Electronic files of handouts you need for your session**

Copies of all handouts submitted by January 6 will be waiting for you at your session. If your handouts will not be ready by then, please plan to bring 40 -50 copies to your session. TOPS cannot pay for printing after January 6.



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Audience Description

The meeting will bring together food security and nutrition implementers and USAID staff, providing an opportunity for peer learning, knowledge sharing, group problem solving, and networking around improved food aid implementation. Participants will be predominantly technical staff with extensive and in-depth experience in food security implementation and with expertise and interest in practical application.

Tips for Success

- **Limit use of PowerPoint.** PowerPoint presentations are useful to provide visual reminders, to illustrate data, and to reinforce key concepts. These presentations are most effective when kept simple and easy to read. Please, avoid “death by PowerPoint,” i.e. wordy slides, reading lists of bullet points, small unreadable font, etc. If PowerPoint will be used, please bring presentations to the meeting on a flash drive.
- **Be aware of timing.** The session lead will provide information to guide your preparation related to timing of your session to facilitate opportunities for discussion and dialogue.
- **Summarize “take home messages”** into key points, recommendations or next steps so that the session leads to actionable learning.
- **Review** the “Quick tips on maximizing dialogue and knowledge sharing in meetings” on the next page.

Watch these tips in action:



This video is based on:

[Designing Participatory Meetings and Brownbags: A TOPS Quick Guide to Linking Development Practitioners](#)



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Quick tips on maximizing dialogue and knowledge sharing in meetings

Excerpted from *Guidelines for Effectively Drawing on the Knowledge of Everyone in the Room*

by Nancy M. Dixon, PhD, Common Knowledge Associates

Drawing out collective knowledge requires more than just bringing knowledgeable people together. It requires a purposeful design. Here are a few quick tips for presentations and meetings that can help to maximize dialogue and sharing between participants.

Connection before content – participants in the meeting need to connect to each other before they try to construct new ideas together. Connection and engagement will be facilitated if participants know:

1. Who is in the room
2. What knowledge others have
3. How others think about the issue discussed in the meeting
4. The group's strengths and weaknesses

Connecting occurs in small groups when members are actively discussing the central issue in a way that allows them to frame themselves in a positive light, e.g., the experiences and successes they have had.

Learn in small groups – integrate in large groups – we learn in small groups. Groups of 3-5 members produce the richest and most in-depth thinking. It is large enough to allow for diverse views yet small enough for members to engage each other through asking questions and challenging or building on ideas. The give and take of the small group generates new knowledge and new ideas which can then be brought together in the large group to integrate into the thinking of the whole.

Diverge then converge – indeed, the first part of any meeting or session can diverge to get new ideas out and to stimulate peoples' thinking. The second part of a meeting or session can then converge to put those ideas to work in terms of the issue that needs to be addressed.

Experts inform our thinking but don't provide us answers – the role of experts is a critical design issue.

Members/participants have to come up with the solutions their organizations face. Experts can stimulate their thinking by talking about what others have done in similar situations. But practices always have to be adapted not adopted, so even the best of examples have to be modified to fit a new context. Fifteen minutes is enough time for an expert to stimulate the group's thinking. Then it is up to participants to connect what the expert has said to their knowledge and experience.

Connecting new ideas to what a participant knows – when experts stimulate our thinking, we need time to process what we have just heard, to move the new ideas from short-term to long-term memory. Connecting ideas is most effectively done in conversation with one or two other members where both have enough time to put their ideas into words.

We learn when we talk – as long as an idea is only in our head, it is not fully formed. It is only when we articulate and apply it, formulating the idea in a way that it can be explained to others, that it takes shape for us as well as others.

