

The Field Office Consultation: A Mini Social Simulation Steve Hoke

A mini social simulation for consultant-facilitators preparing to visit a Relief and Development Organization's field offices.

Objectives

- To stimulate personal reflection and discussion of one's attitudes toward self and learning as one enters a cross-cultural learning or training/consulting experience.
- To discuss traps which inhibit openness, mutual learning, and respect in a cross-cultural consulting/facilitating process.
- To explore biblical teaching on respect, openness, trust and acceptance as character traits to be nurtured in cross-cultural consultant/facilitators.

Guidelines

Avoid the following common mistakes of cross-cultural consultant/facilitators:

- Pushing too hard on one's personal agenda, or being too directive or insensitive.
- Failure to listen well.
- Proposing solutions or making suggestions too soon, or emphasizing your own interpretation of causes of problems.
- Causing others to be embarrassed (to "lose face") by making judgments or by asking too many questions.

Role Players

- Four members of a field office professional staff
- Three visiting consultants from another field office
- Others, as two sets of observers

Debriefing

1. Observers:
How well did the consultants avoid the four mistakes?
2. Consultants:
 - How did you feel about the field office personnel?
 - What did you learn about the needs of this field office?
 - What did you learn about their reactions to you?
3. Observers of the field office:
 - What did you observe about the feelings of field office personnel?
 - What did you observe about the way the field office showing its key values?
4. Field office personnel:
 - How did you feel about these visiting consultants?
 - What did they do to build your confidence in them?
 - What was your key value?
 - What was your planned reaction?

Preparatory Tasks

Field Office 1. Discuss and secretly make a special rule about the particular sensitivity of your culture. You must show a certain reaction to outsiders who violate any one of the four specific mistakes above. 2. Decide on a basic problem in your field office. You are willing to talk with the visiting consultant about the problem, but you should insist that you see the problem more clearly than do the consultants. 3. Try to make good use of the consultants that you have invited.	Visiting Consultants In only ten minutes of contact in the field office you will need to learn as much as possible about their needs. Try to get some ideas about what kind of help they need. Be sure to avoid the four mistakes outlined above. You must try to get started toward finding a solution.
Observers of the Field Office Observe the responses of field office personnel. What are their sensitivities? Observe their attitudes and feelings. How well do they use their consultants?	Observers of the Visiting Consultants How well do they learn about the problems of the field office? Observe their attitudes and feelings.