



## Collaborative tools, services and training

Meet smarter, not harder!

Life is an opportunity, benefit from it.  
Life is beauty, admire it.  
Life is a dream, realize it.  
Life is a challenge, meet it.  
Life is a duty, complete it.  
Life is a game, play it.  
Life is a promise, fulfil it.  
Life is sorrow, overcome it.  
Life is a song, sing it.  
Life is a struggle, accept it.  
Life is a tragedy, confront it.  
Life is an adventure, dare it.  
Life is luck, make it.  
Life is too precious, do not destroy it.  
Life is life, fight for it.

- Mother Teresa

‡ Training run under the USAID BACET (Building Agribusiness Capacity in East Timor) Program, managed by Land O'Lakes.

### training events coming up

#### Brisbane

#### Strategic Thinking & Planning

20–21 April 2010

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#### Understanding & Leading Change

15–16 June 2010

Contact: David Jago

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## Participation 101

I have just returned from ten days in Timor Leste. A small team of us were training extensionistas – government agribusiness extension workers – in *Technology of Participation* facilitation and communication basics‡.

### Tuning in for better training

We all tune in to other people when we talk and work with them. This helps us to understand where they are coming from. In other words, the meaning/s behind what they say and do.

As we were working with the participants, it became clear that the work was not connecting with them. Their starting point was not what we had assumed, based on our previous experience. Their education had included little or no interaction or participation. They therefore had no real idea of what to do in a facilitation context.

Our responsibility was therefore to figure out where they actually were and start from there. It was up to us to fit with them, and then move along in small steps.



Image courtesy of Land O'Lakes staff.

Our solution was to add a direct “**facilitation does...**” component onto the existing **facilitation is not... facilitation is...** and **from... to...** chunks.

In summary, this component said:

- Facilitation enables participation by getting the people in a group to talk with each other.
- You do this by asking open questions (and waiting for responses), providing contextual information and giving appropriate instructions.
- The group does the work of generating and organising information, identifying what is important and stating the outcome/s.
- There is a sequence to doing this – **one structure, many applications**.
- If you are doing more talking than listening, then it's actually a presentation.

We used the metaphor that the facilitator is like a guide – they navigate the group through a journey to an outcome, such as a plan, or decision, or solution.

So, what's your experience of participation? Go online and post a comment.

Go well!

David

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