

## Step 6

### Widening the Dialogue



## How to prepare and conduct Public Meetings

### The aim of the Public Meeting

As you prepare for the Public Meetings remind yourself what they are meant for:

- The aim of the first Public Meeting is to share the spirit and the results of the Dialogue sessions with the whole community, and to motivate as many individuals as possible to support the goals the Dialogue participants have formulated.
- At this meeting, the Dialogue participants act as role models for the other community members. They show them that it is not only possible, but also rewarding for both generations to enter into dialogue and to work jointly on the challenges they face.
- The Public Meeting is also the moment to present pledges and special requests to the community at large and to Community Partners with a specific responsibility, such as local authorities (e.g. chiefs and councillors), religious leaders, teachers and health workers. The more people hear the pledges and special requests, the more they will follow whether these are put into practice, and the more likely they will be to attend the second Public Meeting.

### Who to invite

The Public Meeting is a large, open event which can be attended by anywhere from 100-150 people. Coordinators, facilitators and Dialogue participants should come up with a list of individuals from the community to be invited to the Public Meeting. The exact list of invitees will differ from community to community, but the following categories of people should be considered:

- Representatives of local government, especially those whose portfolios relate to the topic of the Dialogue (e.g. health, education, family, youth, social welfare etc)
- Traditional leaders
- Religious leaders
- Teachers and school principals

## Step 6 - Widening the Dialogue

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- Representatives of the health services
- Representatives of youth groups, women's and men's associations
- Other respected and influential individuals from the community
- Members of the community at large, including both sexes and all generations

### Organisational issues

Both the first and the second Public Meeting should not last longer than two hours. They should be scheduled at a time and place that will allow as many community members as possible to attend.

Find a large hall, preferably one with a stage or dais at the front of the room where community leaders can sit and where Dialogue participants can present the pledges and special requests. The room needs to be big enough so that everyone can hear and see the presentations, and for all older people and adults to have seats. Young people and children can sit on the floor if necessary.

In countries where men and women do not attend public events together, think about ways that the room can be divided by a screen or curtain.

### Plan the programme

Although the Dialogue tackles serious topics, the Public Meeting should feel like a celebratory event. Think carefully about how to create a positive and inviting atmosphere. In addition to presenting the pledges and special requests which the men and women jointly formulate after the Dialogues have been joined, consider including some music, poetry or a short performance. Give thought to how to respectfully introduce the community leaders so that they feel honoured, and how to introduce the purpose of the Dialogue to those who are hearing about it for the first time.

Working together, the coordinators, facilitators and Dialogue participants should develop a 'choreography', or script, for the meeting. Everyone should know what their roles are, and feel prepared to play them.

## Step 6 - Widening the Dialogue

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Together with the facilitators, the Dialogue participants should decide who will present each of the pledges and special requests. Before the meeting they should formulate the pledges and special requests and practice presenting these in a respectful way, through role-play exercises. You may want to share copies of the special requests with the community leaders ahead of time, so they have time to prepare their responses.

### Think about how the media and social media can amplify the Public Meeting

In order to spread the spirit of the Dialogue further, consider inviting journalists and local media to cover the Public Meeting. Encourage Dialogue participants and other attendees to share their impressions of the Meeting on social media. Doing this also increases the likelihood that community leaders act upon the requests that are put to them (accountability).

This document is part of the Generation Dialogue toolkit which is available at [health.bmz.de/generation\\_dialogue\\_toolkit](https://health.bmz.de/generation_dialogue_toolkit)