

Case Study

Programme Policy and Quality Department (PPQ), Save the Children
Friend's House, Euston Road, London 18-22 January 2016

Since 2013, PPQ has held a week long strategic retreat in early January for all 60+ staff. These 'in-week' events each have a theme around which to focus the agenda – this year it was about the contribution of [Save the Children's 2016-18 strategy](#) to the [UN's Sustainable Development Goals](#). This annual event is the only time staff in the UK, regional (foreign) offices and other remote locations around the world get to spend time together – it is a hugely important learning opportunity for the organisation, and a very significant investment.

Our brief was to advise the planning group on the design of the week and lead the facilitation. The PPQ planning group included 18 representatives from each of the 7 different teams in the department. Planning began in August.

Our remit included:

- Advice on structure, learning processes and participatory methods of sessions to achieve good 'flow' during the week and to maximise the achievement of objectives.
- Join the planning group to present drafts of the agenda to the Senior Leadership Team for input and sign off.
- Guide the development of pre-survey questionnaires to inform event design as required
- Coach and support rapporteurs to ensure outcomes are clearly and coherently captured
- Lead the facilitation of sessions throughout the PPQ in-week (excluding the thematic team day)
- Continually assess progress with planning group members during the week itself to ensure smooth running and good alignment
- Review the event to assess how deliverables were met

The Event

There were 11 main sessions over the 5 days, including 6 external speakers and visitors from other departments. Every session included time for interactive discussions, mixing team-members around and giving everyone an opportunity to speak and be heard. We used a mix of methods to capture solutions focussed ideas and proposals, ensuring all participants had many chances to contribute.

Rapporteurs were randomly selected for each session and given a card to fill in which simply asked for 'the thing that sticks with me' and 'the key actions I heard'. We wrote up these and other feedback notes which hadn't been claimed by team-members during the event so the organisers had them all in digital form by each following day.

Energisers were sprinkled throughout, each designed to introduce a useful piece of learning, complimentary to the main event.

Feedback

**“Thanks you again for an amazing 'in-week'.
As per usual, your facilitation was spot on.”**
Mavis Owusu-Gyamfi, Director of PPQ

“Huge thanks again for your brilliant facilitation last week!”
Katy Sklan, Head of Programme Services

**“Thanks you so much for getting us organised
as well as keeping us creative and flexible”**
Nicola Hypher, Senior Social Protection Adviser

**Great facilitation again this year.
Your inputs from planning through to
delivery have been invaluable. We're
getting better at this type of work
due to your inputs.**

Taitos Matafeni, Head of Impact, Innovation & Evidence