

How to facilitate a session

A guide to running a Building Community session where students lead the themes, open the dialogue, and map the allies who can help.

Building Community for Labs4Change

labs4change.org · Methodology Toolkit

1 Prepare

- Form a student core group and assign each member a theme to research in advance.
- Invite students and staff (about 5–15) and prepare guiding questions for each theme.
- Book a comfortable space; bring paper, markers and a wall for the stakeholder map.
- Agree who facilitates overall and who captures the map and the proposals.

2 Run the session

- 10 MIN** Welcome — why you are here, the themes, and how the session works.
- 15 MIN** Theme intros — each student owner briefly frames their theme.
- 35 MIN** Open dialogue — rotate through the themes café-style, surfacing barriers and lived experience.
- 20 MIN** Stakeholder map — brainstorm allies inside and outside the university, and note the gaps.
- 15 MIN** Proposals — agree concrete actions and who might own them.
- 10 MIN** Close — commit to next steps and to keeping the group going.

3 Follow up

- Write up the themes, the barriers named, the stakeholder map and the proposals.
- Reach out to the allies you identified and invite them to a next session.
- Fold the proposals into your Action Plan.
- Keep the core group active, and invite feedback for next time.

4 Running it online

- Give each theme its own board area and breakout room; students host their own theme.
- Build the stakeholder map together on a shared whiteboard.
- Use quick polls to prioritise the proposals.
- Prefer privacy-respecting tools, and keep the board open afterwards.