

# Risk Assessment and Problem Solving (RAPS) Approach to group facilitation

The RAPS is a unique method under development by Dr. Nayanjeet Chaudhury, based on theories of group dynamics and participatory research. This was initially used in facilitating decision making processes among heterogeneous groups engaged in implementation of the HealthRise project, a demonstration project for improving diagnosis and treatment of diabetes and hypertension at primary care level in India and few other countries funded by Medtronic Foundation between 2015 and 2019. Currently, the method is being used in identifying performance issues within large heterogeneous groups within an institution/healthcare facility or within a community, with the aim of collectively solving the most critical and priority barriers in the success of a project or program. The uniqueness of the method is in making every participant engage equally in the brainstorming exercise, irrespective of their professional positions, affiliations and personalities, and help them spontaneously come to a consensus around the complex problems chosen for the workshop and their potential pathways towards effective solutions. Ideally the facilitators along with the project director do substantial background research on the expectations of the participants from the workshop by engaging with few of them in advance. The Master Sessions Plan for the workshop is designed such that those expectations are covered well. It is expected that the facilitator is well aware of the situation on the ground, though is non-judgemental about the opinions of the participants. He/she encourages all the participants to be as open as possible so that thorough engagement is ensured. Typically, the workshop may include several components as depicted in the framework given in Figure 2, with each component customized by the facilitator to the identified needs of the group activity. Overall, it is one of the various forms of highly effective group-facilitation exercises.

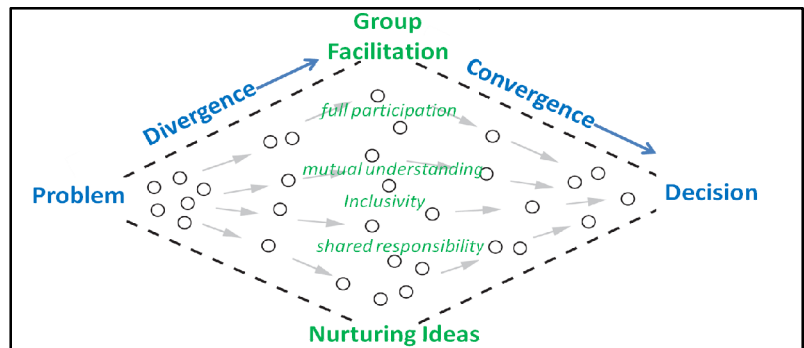


Figure 1: Divergence to Convergence in Group Facilitation used in RAPS (adapted from Kaner, S. (2014). Facilitator's guide to participatory decision-making. John Wiley & Sons.)

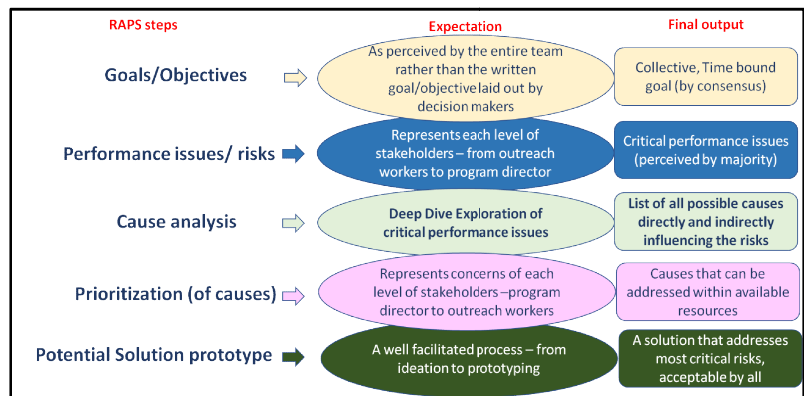


Figure 2: Major steps of RAPS and outputs



Figure 3: Glimpses from various RAPS workshops from across India

## Voices from participants:

RAPS technique..... helped the teams to methodically assess their own performance by identifying the gaps and barriers in the implementation and then prioritising the critical areas that needed innovative solutions. The HealthRise program benefitted immensely as the partner teams became proficient in evaluating their performances and revised their own log frames, modified their strategies and undertook course corrections to ensure the project achieved its desired outcomes. – [Komal Khanna, Ex Project Director, Healthrise \(India\) Project, Abt Associates](#)

In an energy filled participatory RAPS session facilitated by Dr. Nayanjeet, a range of stakeholders including community workers, implementers, managers, and others evolved a consensual pathway to generate systemic change in community behavior and ownership in the community. RAPS is an effective tool to prioritize immediate solutions to complex problems in an equitable and participatory mode - [Dr. Sameer Valsangkar, Lead- Research and Monitoring, Catholic Health Association of India](#)

The beauty of this technique lies in its capability to pool ideas from all participants, dissolving any possibility of hierarchical influence on opinion and ideas of the participating individuals from top to bottom. The technique harnesses collective intelligence in real means and follows a robust, systematic, and scientific approach to figure out a solution for any issue. - [Dr. Aditya Kumar \(PT\), Senior consultant, Family planning division, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India](#)

RAPS is an effective way of co-creating a solution when a group of people come together to brainstorm and address a challenge together. - [Rituu Nanda, The Constellation](#)

RAPS truly engages the audience and facilitates the process of developing solutions to complex problems systematically. It promotes consensual decision making and ownership among the participants. - [Dr. Harsha Tomar, Senior Manager- Innovations Population Services International](#)

The workshop helped identify critical risks and challenges within the program and mitigate them in advance so that the objectives of the program can be met without hassles - [C.N.Haricharan, Program Manager Abt Associates](#)

RAPS helped us to prioritize issues which were raised at health system and patient level - [Dr. Gaurav Sethi, State Program Co-Ordinator, Himachal Pradesh, MAMTA- Health Institute for Mother and Child](#)