Community Harvest Facilitation Guide

Closing a Project with Intention and Community

Purpose of this tool

A complete guide for facilitating a 60–90 minute Community Harvest Gathering — a participatory closing session that honours what was built together, makes community learning visible, and opens the way forward.

How to use this document

This template is designed to be filled in directly — on screen or printed. Fields marked with a dotted underline are for your input. Sections in blue boxes are guidance or instructions. You can adapt the language to fit your local context.

Recommended group size: 5–30 participants

Duration: 60–90 minutes (adaptable)

Materials: Flip chart or wall space, sticky notes (3 colours), markers, this guide, optional: music for opening and closing

When to use: At the close of a project phase, at the end of your Module 5 facilitation project, or at any meaningful transition point in community work

Before the Session

Preparing yourself

A Harvest is different from other facilitation roles. You are more receptive, less directive. Your job is to hold space for emergence — to notice what wants to come forward without steering toward a predetermined conclusion.

My intention for this harvest (what I want the community to feel and know when they leave):

What to prepare in advance

- Review your Reflective Journal and Progress Marker checklists — prepare 3–5 specific observations about the community's journey to share back
- Prepare the physical space: circle of chairs, materials on a central table, flip chart visible
- Choose opening and closing music or a poem if this fits your community's culture
- Print or prepare the Learning Harvest Canvas (Tool 6) if using it as a visual anchor

Session Flow

Opening – Grounding Together (10 min)

Purpose

Create presence. Signal that this is a different kind of gathering — one that moves slowly and honours what was created.

1. Welcome participants. Acknowledge that this is a closing — and that closings deserve to be honoured.
2. Grounding moment: Play one minute of music, read a short poem, or invite a moment of shared silence. Something that creates a distinct threshold between the everyday and this space.
3. Opening round: "In one word or one image — how do you arrive here today?" Go around the circle. No explanations needed.

Notes from opening round (words or images shared):

Sharing Back (15 min)

Purpose

Make the community's own growth visible to them. This is one of the most powerful things a facilitator can do.

Share 3–5 specific moments or changes you observed during the project. Use the community's own words. Name concrete behaviours you witnessed — not your interpretation, but what you actually saw or heard.

Frame it generously: "Here is what I witnessed in this community over these weeks..."

The 3–5 observations I will share back:

Community Voices – What / So What / Now What (25–35 min)

Purpose

Let the community name its own learning. Your role here is to listen and reflect back themes, not to guide toward a conclusion.

Run in pairs or small groups (3–4 people), then open to the full circle for key sharing.

Phase	Question	Facilitation notes
WHAT?	What happened? What did we do together, observe, or experience?	Keep this factual. If people interpret too early, gently bring back: "Before meaning — what actually happened?"
SO WHAT?	What does it mean? What patterns or shifts do you notice?	This is where meaning emerges. Listen for themes. Note them visibly. Allow silence.

NOW WHAT?	What do we carry forward? What is our next step — individually or collectively?	This generates commitment. Invite specificity: "What will you actually do?"

Key themes that emerged from community voices:

Forward Seeds (10 min)

Each person names one word, image, or intention they are carrying forward. Collect these on a visible surface — a wall, a shared paper, a large sheet.

After everyone has shared: photograph or record the wall. This becomes part of your project documentation.

Closing Ritual (5–10 min)

A deliberate closing matters. It signals that something real was held here and is now being honoured as complete.

- Option A: A closing round — each person shares one word of appreciation for the group.
- Option B: A gesture of commitment — each person states one specific next step aloud.
- Option C: A physical closing — standing circle, hands placed, a moment of shared presence.

Choose what fits your community's culture. The important thing is intentionality — don't just end, close.

After the Session

What the community named as their most important learning:

What surprised me — something I didn't observe during the project itself:

What I will document and share back with participants within one week:

Closing the loop

Within one week: share a brief summary of the harvest — key themes, forward seeds, commitments — with all participants. A simple message, a printed sheet, or a forum post. This act of sharing back is itself a participatory gesture: it says that what was created here belongs to everyone.

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