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Economic nutrition guide workshop (2.5 hour version) Facilitator's guide

Things you may wish to consider bringing:

- 1-2 physical maps of the city or geographic area you are discussing
- Tape to physically put up maps on walls
- Sheets of name tags and box of pens / markers for guests' notes and name tags, as well as a few stacks of colorful sticky notes
- Copies of the worksheet, printed and stapled, or projector to project live on screen
- Optional: cookies / veggie tray / water, tea and coffee

Organizers may wish to arrive in the space 30 mins early to set up the space so that it is conducive to group discussion, place physical maps on a wall and a second map that people can look at more closely if they need to during some of the exercises. Tables and chairs may be arranged in a circle for plenary discussion, which can then morph into individual table conversations for 3-4 people at a time.

// Welcome and introductions (10 mins)

Organizers to kick off gathering, introduce the space and the facilitator. [5 minutes]

Moderator to provide opening remarks, re-introduce the economic nutrition guide as a concept, potentially using [a variation of this introductory video](#), and walk through the outline of the session. [5 minutes]

// Activity 1: Individual exercise: ice-breaker (10 mins)

Moderator: As an ice-breaker, I would like us to go around the room and introduce ourselves; thinking about the past few months, tell us about a purchase where you felt -- "well, that was money well spent!". I'll give you a few moments to think about something, and we'll start to my left.

// Activity 2: Individual exercise: validating categories (10 mins)

Moderator: I am now going to ask you to validate that the list of spending categories we are starting from is *complete*. Go to Page 1 in your [Worksheets](#), and think about your monthly spending, from a 'category' perspective; you may notice that things like shelter, utilities, and childcare aren't there, since there typically isn't much choice in the matter - you have to pay a mortgage or rent, you have to get electricity and heat. The categories present are meant to show areas in which we have a greater amount of choice in our spending.

Guiding question: Do you feel there are any categories that we might have missed? Are there categories from your own life that you feel should be included in a larger guide?

Further instructions: Take a few minutes to think if you would add a category based on your personal spending patterns. Or perhaps you want to merge or combine a category with another one. Or maybe you'd like to take something out completely?

We'll take 5 minutes for this exercise, and then I will ask for a few volunteers to share their changes with our group. // [1 min instructions; 5 mins wait time]

Once allotted time has passed: Okay, would anyone like to volunteer to share with us what you've added, taken out, or modified on your worksheet? // [4 mins sharing time]

// Activity 3: Group exercise: purchase choices (15 mins)

Moderator: Now that we have landed on our categories, we will try to link them to the *how* and *where* we make purchases in these categories -- for instance, let's pick the 'Clothing' category -- there are lots of ways to purchase clothing -- you can get a new sweater at Walmart, you can order it on Amazon; you can buy it second-hand from a garage sale, or directly from a local independent slow-fashion store -- the point is that 'how' and 'where' you do this purchase ends up impacting the community level, beyond the category in and of itself.

And just to be clear, we're not trying to guilt people who might buy things from a place that has a bad employer reputation; we are all full of contradictions, and sometimes we go out of our way to buy only fair trade coffee, while getting here in an Uber, like I did. But the more aware we are about the impacts of our purchases and attempt to align them to our values, the better our neighbourhoods will become, is the main thesis of the economic nutrition guide.

So with that context out of the way, I will now ask you to turn to the second page on your [Worksheets](#), where we will begin to get a sense of how to think about our purchase choices.

Further instructions: Take your list of categories from Page 1 in your worksheets, modify what's different on the sheet for the second Page (if you need to), and then in groups, we'll try to fill in some of the ways in which you might purchase within some of the categories on the sheet.

Table 1 can do the first 5 categories beyond the illustrative examples given there, so: Business Expenses, Cell phones, Clothing, Cosmetics and Donations - you can write those down in your sheet as the 5 categories you will deal with. **Table 2** could do the next 5 categories (*say it out loud together, so they know what they are*). **Table 3** could do the next 5 categories (*depending on how many people are in the room*), and so on. I'll give you 10-12 minutes for this part of the exercise. // [3 mins instructions; 12 mins for the exercise].

If you finish early, or if you have a lot of trouble placing one or more of these categories, feel free to discuss other categories with your table.

Once allotted time has passed: Okay, we'll do one more quick exercise before the break, and we'll stay in the same group formation.

// Activity 4: Group exercise: ascribing initial value (10 mins)

Moderator: Now that we've landed on our categories and we have a sense of our purchase choices for at least a few of our categories, I will ask you to turn to the third page of your [Worksheets](#), where we will begin to place some of these categories into our color-coded groupings, essentially ascribing initial value to them.

So in the same Table group formation, I will ask you to look at your list of categories from Page 1, as well as your filled-out purchase choices from Page 2, and then transcribe the categories you've worked on as a group into the various impact columns that you see on Page 3, based on what you think the impact of those purchases is on your community where you live. For example, which ones belong in "Green" / "Yellow" / "Orange" and "Red", corresponding to "Choose most often", "Choose wisely", "Limit", and "Avoid"?

Don't worry too much if you still don't know exactly where to place these yet, we'll deal with that in the next exercise; for now, go with your first instinct, or your gut feeling on where you think a category's purchases should go.

I'll give you around 5 minutes or so for this part of the exercise. // [3 mins instructions; 5 mins for the exercise].

Once allotted time has passed: "Okay. We'll take a 10-15 minute break to grab a cup of tea, say hello to folks you know or introduce yourself to someone you don't yet know, stretch your legs or use the washroom, and we'll be back together at the latest by [*mention the reconvening time*].

Refreshments Break (15 minutes)

// Activity 5: Group exercise: ascribing community-level impact (20 mins)

Moderator: Welcome back to the second part of our workshop. We'll continue mainly in groups for this second part. If you remember your formation before the break, please go back to that same group. You will use Pages 4 and 5 in the [Worksheet](#) to come up with a list of community impacts - either neutral, positive, negative or both - for the categories you've "gut-assigned" before the break.

You could start by seeing if everyone's individual's worksheets look the same, or if there are places within your 5 categories that people assigned elsewhere than you.

If there are divergent areas, is it possible to arrive at a consensus on where the purchases within those categories belong within the community-impact table?

Either by starting with the areas where you agree, or by starting with the contentious ones, your group will have 15 minutes to discuss the positives and the negatives within each of your 5 categories, one by one. You'll ideally come up with at least one reason for each purchase's placement within a category, noting the positive or negative impact of that purchase on your community. (5 mins instructions + set-up; 15 mins for the exercise].

// Activity 6: Individual exercise: geography-specific gems & aggregators (20 mins)

Moderator: We're almost at our final activity, which is making sure we are tapping into everyone's collective knowledge of place. For this activity, we're aiming to uncover all the businesses, platforms and aggregators that everyone might know about. You will use pages 6-7 in the [Worksheet](#) to come up with examples for each category (irrespective of where that category is on the color coded spectrum, with the exception of the red category, since we do not really want to advertise not so good things) that are within our geographic scope of our workshop.

Some categories might have more than one noteworthy example that some of you may want to write down (in previous sessions, folks brought up a bunch of examples for the clothing category); others might not have anything geography-specific to mention in some categories (for example, there's little to say at the local level about cell phone providers or technology devices, unless there's a store everyone should know about that repairs phones, sells really good used ones, etc.).

Feel free to use the physical maps on the wall as well as the map provided on *this table*, as well as search for something online if you can't quite recall the name of a store. Ideally you'd be able to fill out at least one example of a place that you feel others should know about for a specific category.

If that store is not physically located in the geography we're talking about in this session but it's pretty close by, you can add a little asterisk to the worksheet; if there's too few examples within our specific geography, we can always broaden it later; point is not to be too bogged down by the confines of specific geographic contours.

And if you are done early, feel free to join another person and see what they wrote about. Finally, if possible, please write legibly as we will collect these worksheets afterwards to build our guide. // [5 mins instructions + set-up; 10-15 mins for the exercise].

Once allotted time has passed: Ok, that's it - let's have one last group conversation before we head out.

// Activity 7: Sharing circle: putting it all together (20 mins)

Moderator: Okay, we're almost at the end of our time together; thank you for working so hard on these; I'm excited to see it all together!

We'll do a sharing circle, where you have 1 minute to tell us your impressions. This can be general reflections on how you thought the exercise went, or any immediate thoughts you'd like to share. Or you can tell us any of the following more specific prompts:

- Did this exercise make you want to go support the stores / aggregators you found yourself excited about sharing with everyone?
- Is there a way to 'protect' / 'better support' these local stores we care about, and whom we think do good for our local area?
- Are you excited to visit any of these new places you'll see on the guide, once we collate all entries?
- Did you end up shifting any of the categories around, based on the community impact conversation, or once you started writing out what that purchase does to the community?

We'll start to my right this time.

// Final thoughts / next steps / thank you's (5 mins)

Moderator: If you've enjoyed this exercise, perhaps we can continue to build on it, or update it on a regular basis. The point of it from my perspective was to get you thinking about your purchases, and about how you approach your economic activity in such a way as to have it aligned with your personal values.

Hopefully you've met some new folks, learned some interesting - and perhaps even contrasting - perspectives than yours, and grew to know about and appreciate some of the places in your local area that offer you services you like and want to keep on supporting.

Finally, since this is a new pilot for a new tool, I am sure elements could be improved -- not just in the guide itself, but also in the way we structured the workshop:

You will receive an email in the coming days with a short survey on elements you liked, didn't like, things that confused you, or things you'd do differently next time. It would be very helpful to me to get this information as I keep improving on this community tool.

Next steps: In terms of next steps, we will collect your worksheets and come up with a draft electronic version of this specific Economic Nutrition Guide. We will then send you the draft electronically for your validation and feedback. Once that takes place, the idea is to print some to look like this (*moderator to show a physical copy of a previous economic nutrition guide and what it looks like on paper*), as well as host the guide online in a few places.

Thank you: Finally, I want to take another moment to thank you all for coming and engaging with this material. Thank you to (list all the folks that need thanking).