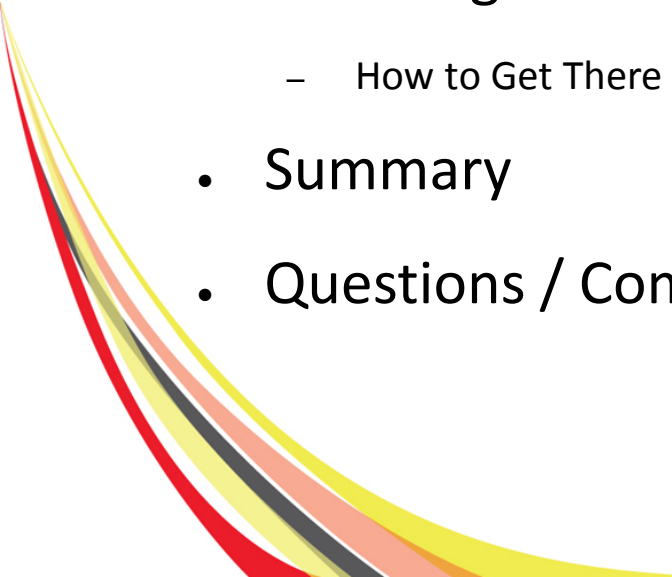# It's OK – Consensus Reached. We've Agreed to Disagree!

Sharan Foga
Vancouver: 13th May 2016

Agenda

- ## Introduction

  – About Me / Consensus Definitions

- ## Misconceptions

  – Apache and Project Organisation / Community Interaction

- ## Changing Perspective

  – Asking the Community / Changing my Ideas

- ## Reaching Consensus

  – How to Get There / Problems / Agreeing to Disagree

- ## Summary

- ## Questions / Comments

INTRODUCTION

Who am I?

What is Consensus?

Who am I?

- Consultant / Project Manager / Author
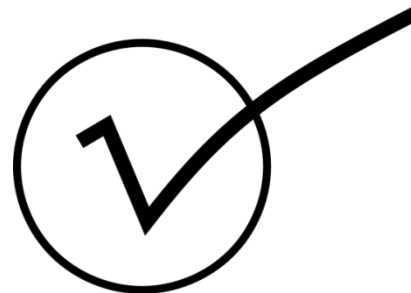
- Enjoy travelling

- Involved with OFBiz since 2008

- Committer and PMC Member

- My 3rd Apachecon
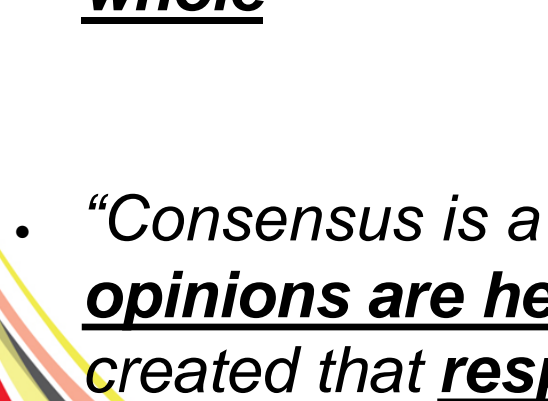
Definitions: What is Consensus?

- Agreement

- Harmony

- Accord

- Unity

- Oneness

- Like-mindedness

- Unison

- Solidarity

Definitions: What is Consensus?

- *"When there's a consensus, **everyone agrees** on something"*

- *"**Middle ground** in decision making, between total assent and total disagreement"*

- *"Consensus implies that **everyone accepts and supports** the decision, and **understands** the reasons for making it"*
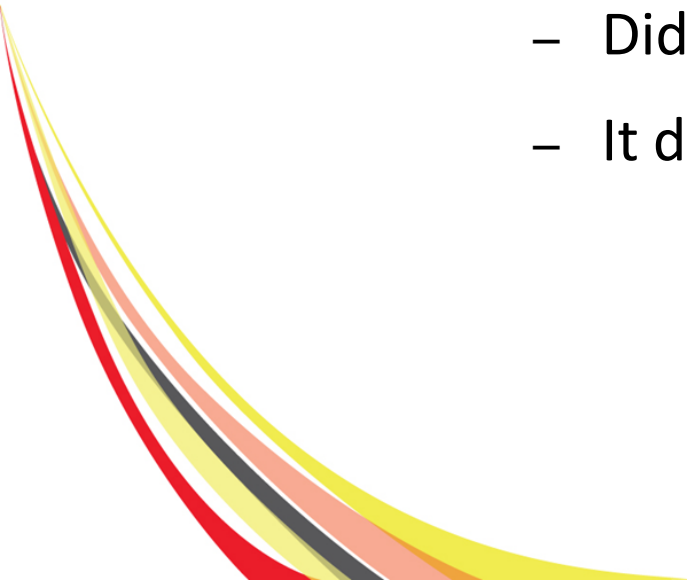
Definitions: What is Consensus?

- *"Consensus depends on participants **having shared values and goals,** and on having **broad agreement** on specific issues and overall direction"*

- *"Consensus decision-making is a group decision-making process in which group members develop, and agree to support, a decision **in the best interest of the whole**"*

- *"Consensus is a group discussion where **everyone's opinions are heard and understood**, and a solution is created that **respects those opinions**"*

What did Consensus mean to me?

Absolutely Nothing!

- – I didn't need it

- – Didn't use it

- – Didn't care

- – It didn't affect me

MISCONCEPTIONS

Project Organisation

Community Interaction

My Normal Working Environment

- Corporate Projects
  - Defined Goals and Objectives
  - Fixed Budget
  - Deadlines

- Managing Projects
  - Planning and Tasks
  - Defined Roles
  - Constant Tracking

Misconceptions: PMC and Committers

- ## Project Management Committee

  - Project Steering Committee

  - Senior Management

- ## Committers

  - Project Managers / Team Lead

  - Follow Up and Progress Reporting

Misconceptions: Proposals

- Only PMC, Committers or established community members can make proposals

- It's already been discussed in the past so can never be brought up again

- I'm new so I don't know anything

Misconceptions: Reponses

- Someone disagrees so it's never going to be accepted

- No one has responded means no-one is interested

- Silence means agreement

- My opinion wont count I'm not important enough in the community

- If I disagree with someone they will see it as a personal attack
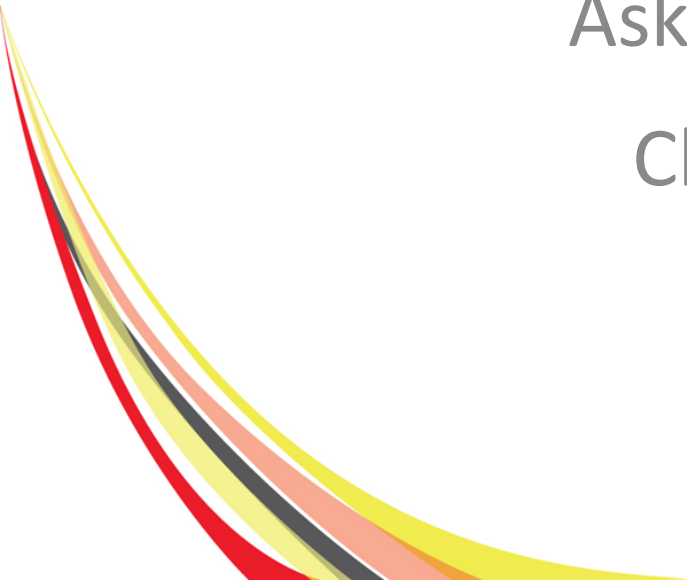
- It looks like a vote so I can't participate

It only became important to me when I wanted the project to do something that I wanted!

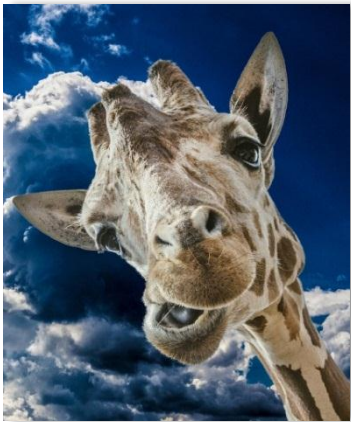# CHANGING PERSPECTIVE

Asking the Community

Changing My Ideas

Asking the Community

- Making proposals is hard

- Publicly stating your view

- Who are these people anyway ?

Disagreeing

- Disagreeing publicly is hard

- Focus on the topic

- What are the other options?

What made me change my ideas?

- Change of involvement

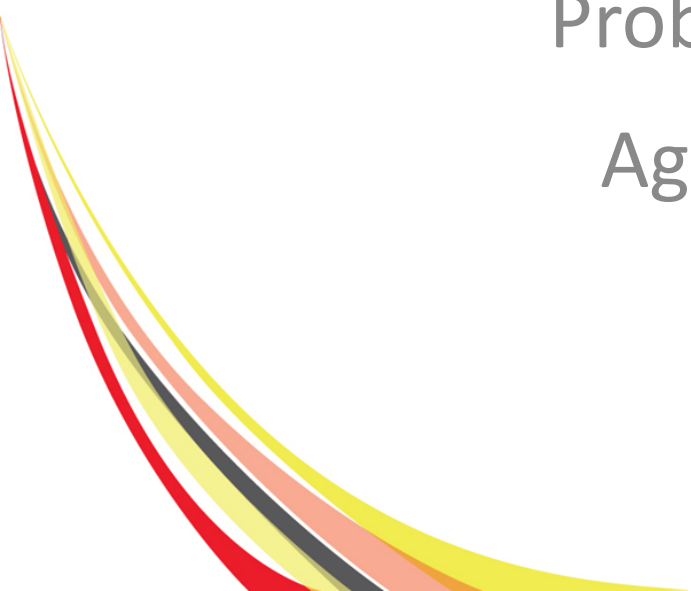- Positive feedback / Community Support

- Didn't have to convince everyone

- Everyone didn't have to actively agree

- Consensus began to work for me

REACHING CONSENSUS

Problems Getting There

Agreeing to Disagree

Consensus: Problems Getting There

- Need to work to achieve it

- Personality conflicts

- Endless discussions without progress

- Things left in limbo

- Misunderstandings

Stating What You Want to Do or Change

- Communicate simply and clearly

WHAT?

- Why are you doing it?

Why?

- What benefits does it bring?

Benefits?

- Always ask for feedback

FEED BACK

Interpreting Responses

- Disagreeing doesn't mean they think it's a bad idea

- Sometimes smaller steps are needed

- May need to go away and do some work offline then report back

- Do you need to respond – Is it Lazy Consensus?

- Focus on the topic not the person

- Assess any alternative options

It's OK to change your mind!

Totalling it All Up!

- Integers and Fractions

  - +1, 0, -1

  - +.75, -0, -0.9

1+1 = Yes

- Reading the general mood

  - Acknowledge feedback and input

  - Address any further discussion points

  - Don't close off getting any more feedback

-0.25 +0.75 = MAYBE?

Agreeing to Disagree

- ## We are all different

  - People

  - Ideas and Backgrounds

  - Experiences

- ## Diverse Community

  - Multi-way Discussions

  - Need Mutual Respect

  - Need to accept that not everyone will agree with you

  - Not about being right or wrong - it's about having a different opinion

Agreeing to Disagree

Problem

- Causing friction in the community
- Heated discussions
- Clear conflicts of opinion
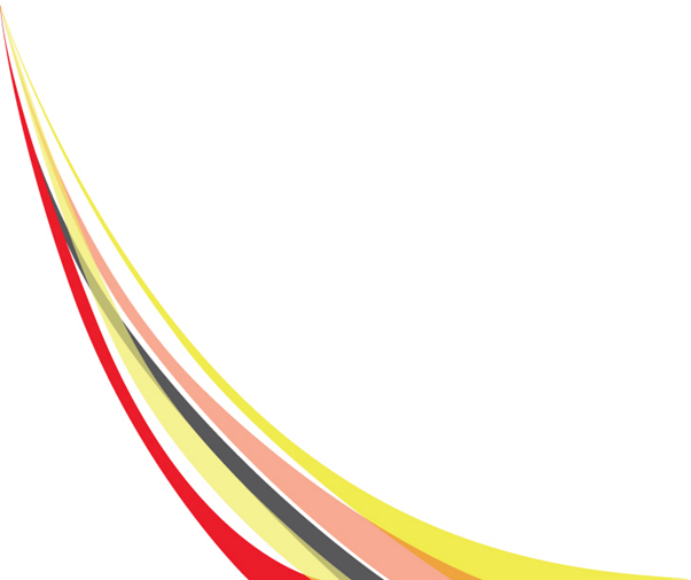- Round and round with no resolution

Resolution

- Agreement out of disagreement
- Found a solution even though we didn't agree on the way to handle it
- People did the right thing for the project

SUMMARY

Summary

- Didn't think it would affect me ….but it did

- Seen how my views changed by becoming part of a community

- Found that disagreeing is also part of our diversity

- Learned how you can achieve agreement out of disagreement
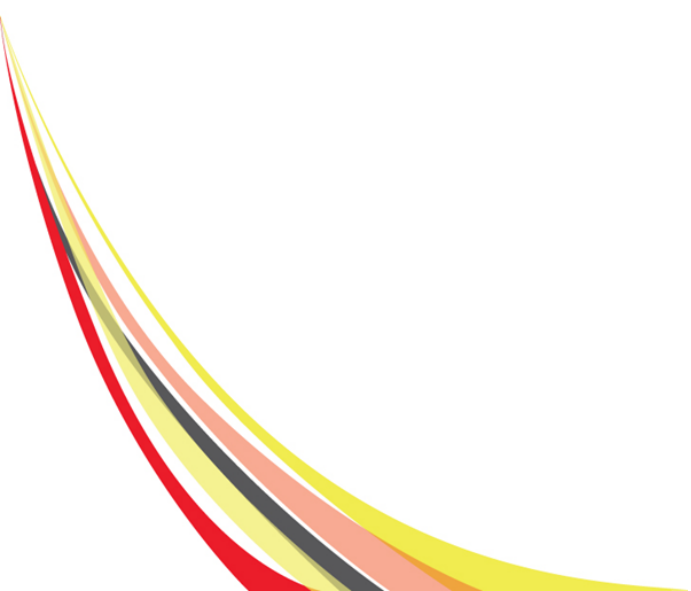
Consensus and Me

- Agreement and recognition that what you want may not be as important

- Process, mindset and idea

- Can't be defined by a single word or sentence

- It's a group of ideas around a central theme

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

Questions?

Comments?

Images

- Pixabay.com