

Training Tips

Introduction

This document is a supplementary addition to the ECU/INEE education in Emergencies training package. It provides a number of tips, examples of best practice and ideas for facilitating workshops. The “tips” are divided into five areas (listed below).

- i. **Learning Styles**
- ii. **Content**
- iii. **Methods**
- iv. **Environment**
- v. **Product/Outcomes.**

I. Learning Styles

There are typically 3 main learning styles:

1. Visual*: learners rely on pictures. They learn by looking at graphs, diagrams, photos, illustrations, seeing key points in writing etc...

2. Auditory: The person learns best by listening such as through presentations.

3. Kinesthetic: learners learn by doing. Group work, role play, analyzing a case study would work well for them.

* Visual is sometimes broken down into those who prefer writing (symbols) and those who have a more spacial orientation (diagrams)

Most adults will use all three learning styles, but will prefer a particular style. It is thus important to include a variety of different types of learning methods within each training module.

II. Content

Preparation

- Prepare. Know what it is you’re going to cover in each session.
- Ensure that you have all the materials and have prepared all the aids you need for each session.
- Review participant list and try to get a sense of their level of comprehension and understanding of the content this will help you to focus the training on their learning needs.
- Understand the context in which the participants work and the key issues related to the training content – What is the emergency context? What are the major challenges to implementing education programming in emergencies? What are the policies related to education in emergencies? Who are the major actors? This will be more applicable at the country and regional level.
- Have some examples from your own experience to relate to the content.
- Consider the language skills of the participants, whether there will be translation (if so some sessions may need to be condensed to allow time for translation).

Implementation

- As the facilitator/trainer, you must understand the subject matter very well.
- You do not have to demonstrate everything you know, but you should understand the key content well enough to facilitate discussions and incorporate participant comments into the message you are trying to teach.
- Create a mindset for your participants: explain the learning objectives for each session.
- The workshop is not for you to show off your knowledge, actively encourage and give space for the input of the participants. Many will have tremendous experience, especially in the local context and challenges to be faced.
- Ensure that the sessions have variety and use a range of methods to maintain the pace of the session or day.
- Sessions should be well planned, but make sure you are also flexible so that you can respond to the needs of the participants.
- Conclude each session or day by synthesizing what has been covered. Summarizing and clarifying the key points of the sessions help the participants to focus on learning outcomes.
- Be sure to thank participants for their time and attention.

III. Method

The methodology of this course is built on principles of adult learning. The course is designed to use a variety of methods:

- **Lectures:** where the whole group needs particular instructions or information
- **Brainstorming:** where lots of ideas are generated to find solutions or develop discussion
- **Case studies:** where real life examples are presented in an encapsulated form for analysis and discussion, generally in small groups.
- **Group work:** to explore concepts or to gain a particular outcome
- **Role-plays:** to explore particular situations
- **Simulations:** where particular roles are scripted within a scenario
- **Debates:** to explore the pros and cons of various options.

These have been varied to provide pace to the day and to suit the content and the groups with whom you will be working.

Lecture

- This should be used when you have information to pass on to the whole group.
- You need to be well prepared and take into account the group with whom you are working. Use their skills and experiences to enhance your lecture.
- Be enthusiastic about your subject and your participants. [See the psychological environment.]

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is used when you want a lot of ideas about a topic in a short time or where you are asking for a lot of information.

- If the group is larger than twenty, ideally you should divide it into at least two groups for the brainstorming activity. When time is short, having a large group brainstorm and discussion is fine.
- Encourage all participants to contribute to the brainstorm.

- There should be no judgment of ideas proffered and all ideas are accepted.
- There should be no discussion of the ideas until the brainstorming is over (approximately 10 minutes).
- At the end of the ten minutes, the ideas should be categorized into groups according to the discussion proffered by the participants themselves.

Case studies

The case studies used in this training course are both real and fictional ones developed from real situations. They provide a situation that can be controlled for analysis and application of the education in emergencies concepts.

This approach allows participants to practice their response and, ideally, they should be able to transfer the lessons to real-life situations.

Make sure that everybody has enough time to read the case study and allow enough time for this; especially for people who may not be reading in their mother tongue. If it is appropriate, read the case study yourself so that people can follow in their workbooks.

Review the key points and information of the case study through a brief power point presentation. This will also give participants an opportunity to ask questions about the case study.

Group work

Group work can be used for most discussions where you are drawing on the skills of the participants. In terms of gender awareness make sure that in group work the men do not dominate. Raise this issue in general discussion if necessary. For brainstorming activities and for the preparation of demonstrations, you need groups composed of participants with different experiences. For summarising experiences, you need similar professions or backgrounds (e.g. all teachers, all head teachers, all programme managers). *Never* group according to nationality, ethnic background or gender, except for the purpose of a common language. Groups can range from pairs to six or eight people.

There are several reasons why group work can be very effective.

- People who may not contribute in a large group may feel more comfortable and therefore ready to contribute in a small group.
- As a general rule, if you want to create a variety of ideas, use a larger, randomly chosen group. If consensus within the group is important, use a smaller group of people with the same aims or backgrounds.
- Conclusions that are made by the groups are owned by the people in the groups. This means that they are more likely to abide by them.
- Participants in the group learn to create their own solutions.

Always give instructions as to what you want the group to do *before* you form the groups (for example, what each group has to do, when you will give them their materials *[if any]*, where the groups will be placed in the room and how long they have for their discussion).

- Group people quickly and get them started on their activity. Remember, putting people into groups is not the activity.:
 - For the first grouping, simply group people who are sitting together in the size of group you want (generally three or four). Use this method more than once, only if you ask people to sit next to people they don't know at different times in the workshop.

- Count around the room (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.). Remember this will give you a number of groups not the size of the group. So if you have 25 participants and you want groups of 4 you need to count to 6 (and then one group will have five people). If you use this method more than once either make sure that people have changed seats or start counting from a different place in the room.
- Sometimes you need groups where people have a common background. These groups need to be nominated and then sub-divided (for example if there are 10 teachers then you may have two groups of teachers).
- Groups can be formed according to colours, or what people are wearing. Be careful that you do not choose things that are gender specific.
- Move around and observe the groups to ensure that they are working according to instructions. Check to ensure that one person is not dominating the group discussion and that all are involved. Listen to the discussion and pose questions or offer suggestions if you think the group is going off track. This movement should be continual so that every group is visited at least twice in the time period allowed.
- The process of group work is always the most important element. However, the outcome of the group work must be shared with all the participants. These feedback sessions can (and should) be varied. A feedback session, which consists of one member of the group reading a flip chart (group after group), can become very boring very quickly. Role-plays or scenarios acted out can be very powerful, as can a 'gallery walk' where each group's conclusions are put up on the walls for everybody to walk to and read. You can ask groups to report back on one or two key points that were particularly interesting, or to not repeat something that has already been shared.
- Whatever methods you choose for a feedback session, make sure that you ask for explanations and clarifications, and have some questions of your own to stimulate discussion from the large group.

Role-plays

Role-plays are used to illustrate a point or concept you are trying to make.

- Discussion on the role-plays should be restricted to the concept you want to illustrate and not on the quality of the acting.
- Ensure that the participants are aware that the characters depicted in the role-plays are only characters and that the people acting the parts should not be judged according to the characters they play.
- Some role-plays require the participants to take on certain characters, which you have prepared. Ensure that the participants really understand exactly what you require from them if you use scripted role-plays. Discuss with each group separately to ensure that the roles are interpreted as you have scripted them.
- At the conclusion of the role-play, ask the participants to stay in role while the discussion takes place on motives, etc. of the characters.
- There should always be open discussion about the issues raised in the role-plays. Make sure that you have some questions for each character to stimulate discussion.

Simulations

In this course simulations are used to allow participants the opportunity to work with a given situation and to formulate responses. It is similar to a role play in that particular people are given roles but the situation is more structured and the processes that are to be

undertaken are clearly stated. The simulation in this training package is fictional, but has been designed based on real life situations.

Debate

Debates provide an opportunity for participants to think through arguments to support advocacy. Taking an opposing position encourages understanding of another point of view, which helps participants construct well-developed arguments.

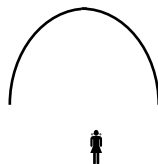
IV. Environment

There are two parts to environment. The first is the physical environment and the second is the psychological environment.

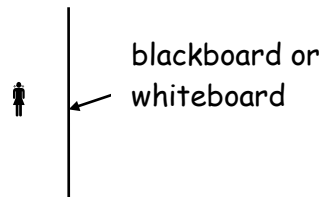
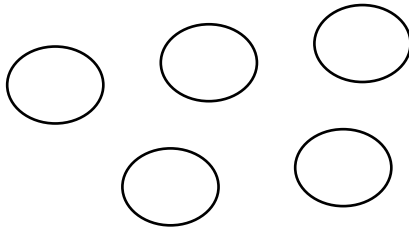
The physical environment

The venue

- Organize the seating so that there is no barrier between you and the participants. Never sit behind a desk.
- Ensure that, whatever arrangement you choose, you (and the participants) can move freely around the room.
- Check windows and where the sun comes in. Never stand directly in the path of sunlight or with the sun shining into the eyes of participants (that is, with your back to the sun). If the participants cannot see you, they will lose interest.
- If there are desks or tables for the participants, then stand for your training (unless you are having an open discussion). If the participants are seated in a circle or semi-circle then, providing you can see everybody, you can sit (that way you are more part of the group).
- Classic seating arrangements are the horseshoe or hollow square.



- There are other arrangements, which may be more suitable for your room or the type of training.



- The small tables mean that generally your groups are already formed (by table) which may be appropriate for some situations. If you want to change the groups remember to ask people to move and take all their belongings with them.

Training Equipment

- Ensure that all participants can see the board or audio-visual aids that you are using.
- If using a flip chart, blackboard, whiteboard, make sure that your writing is clear, large enough to be read and straight. If you are using a whiteboard, remember that it is more slippery than a chalkboard and there is a good chance that your writing will suffer.
- If the blackboard is long (horizontally) divide it into sections. Always write from left to right (if the language is from left to right). Know what you are going to write and where you will place it before writing anything.
- Often people think that writing in capital letters is neater than ordinary printing. If you choose to write in capital letters, remember that it takes more time to write anything and brainstorming in particular can become very tedious.
- All board work should summarize what you are saying or have said. Drawings and graphic representations can be used to great effect. Keep your drawings simple (For example: stick figures), and use diagrams that are simple and reinforce the point you are trying to make. Any drawing or diagram should make your point obvious with as few words as possible.
- If you are using electrical or electronic equipment, tape down the cords, ensure that all the equipment works before the session starts and be careful not to stand in front of the projection.
- If you are using power-point presentations or overhead projections, never just read from the slides – only the key points should appear, your job is then to speak to those points.
- If you use the “Gallery Walk” as reporting method, make sure the flip charts are spread around the walls so that people can see them clearly
- Make sure that you refer the participants to their workbooks for questions exercises and supplementary notes.
- Make sure that handouts that need to be used during a session are handed out before the activity, but if handouts are a summary, they should be handed out at the end.

Breaks

- The average adult attention span is about forty-five minutes. This does not mean that you need a break every forty-five minutes but you do need a change of activity.
- Breaks should last between fifteen to thirty minutes. Participants need this time to mentally ‘regroup’ and to discuss issues that have arisen during the presentations.
- If you can, ensure that there are a variety of drinks.
- If you are working in a hot climate, always make sure there is water freely available throughout the session (not just at break times).

The psychological environment

The psychological environment depends almost entirely on you, the facilitator/trainer. It is your job to create an atmosphere where people are willing and able to learn. Keep in mind that gender equality (not just equity) is primarily your responsibility. Make sure that the women in the group are not dominated by the men and that women should take leading roles. If you are co-facilitating (a team of facilitators), remember that your preparation and planning should be done as a team and that your manner towards each other should reflect the same respect and co-operative attitude you would like from the participants. Having a facilitation partner helps sessions run more smoothly as one person can keep

time while the other is conducting the session and as both facilitators can move around the groups, which is more timely and effective.

Manner

- Be warm, friendly and enthusiastic. If you enjoy yourself in the training, the participants probably will as well.
- Never set yourself up as the master. The participants are adult learners and deserve the respect of their age and experience.
- Learn the names of as many participants as you can (or have name badges). Use individual's names, not just to ask questions, but if you refer to a point made by a participant, acknowledge it by naming the person.
- Be genuinely interested in what your participants have to say; if you need clarification or more explanation ask for it, gently and with a smile. Remember, you are not an examiner.
- Listen to what participants say, really listen. Don't stop listening part way through to formulate your response. Nobody minds if you think for a few moments before answering. In fact, it is a compliment to the participant.
- Listen also when participants talk to each other; many people feel too shy to speak from their heart to a facilitator/trainer, but they will to their colleagues.
- If you give an example to the group and one person (in your example) has done wrong, take that role yourself. Let the participant be the 'good guy'.

Eye contact and voice

- Make frequent eye contact, not staring (which intimidates participants) but look at all the participants.
- Use your peripheral vision (looking out of the corner of your eye) so you notice the participants to your side, especially if they want to speak.
- When you move around the room, stand beside people you wish to speak to, not in front of them as this is often seen as very aggressive (especially if you lean over the desk/table).
- Speak clearly and not too fast, but loud enough for all participants to hear and with expression (a monotone will put your participants to sleep).
- Use the level of language your participants need. This is not the time to prove how clever you are. Simple language does not mean simple concepts.
- If you are working with people whose mother tongue is not the language of instruction, make sure that you use short simple sentences and allow more time for responses. It is not easy to think in another language and people may be translating the information before formulating a response.

Posture

- Stand straight; slumping makes you look tired, as if you would rather not be there.
- It is considered rude in most cultures to point with a finger or stand with your hands on your hips. Often, folding (crossing) your arms is also unacceptable.
- Move for a reason: to make a point, to talk to a particular group, to check if people need your help. There are several types of trainers that you don't want to be like:
 - *the walker*: this is the one who walks ceaselessly up and down. Participants become mesmerized by the pacing to and fro, and fail to listen to what is being said.

- *the swayer*: this is similar, but they move only on the spot, back and forwards or from side to side.
- *the wanderer*: this one also walks but all over the room; talking to the backs of people as he/she walks around the room, talking all the time.
- *the statue*: this one is perfectly still – no movement at all.
- *the waver*: this one waves his/her hands around continually, not to illustrate a point, just waving. This also distracts the participants.

The psychological environment also depends to some extent on the participants. Make sure that they know each other, that they feel psychologically comfortable in each other's company. Many ice-breakers have just this purpose. *Never* make a fool of a participant. If it should happen unintentionally, apologize. It should not be necessary to formulate rules with adult learners. Make sure you are courteous and your participants will also be courteous.

Training or facilitating should be enjoyable for both you and the participants. It is a learning experience for everybody. Be sure to acknowledge what you learn from the participants.

V. Product/outcomes

- The product or outcomes from any training should be tangible. If participants make recommendations or decisions, ensure that these are followed.
- Outcomes can be difficult to judge during the course. Try to make sure that you can follow up at a later time.
- Ask participants to summarise what has been learned during a session or a day.
- Have revision sessions built into the course. Make this a quiz or some form of game; the participants should be able to discuss and build on each others' responses.
- If necessary, have follow up sessions so that it is possible to see results of the workshop.
- If you use written evaluation sheets, make sure that you leave enough time for them to be completed or, if it is possible, ask them to complete their evaluation sheets two weeks after the course. This gives a real indication of the value of the course.
- If you use written evaluation sheets, always make sure that they are anonymous (that is, do not ask for people's names).