

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATORS

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If you are interested in designing, delivering and evaluating awareness-raising and training activities and do not really know where to begin, you will find principles and suggestions in this guide that you can apply in different contexts and with different targets by adapting the ideas here presented as necessary to your specific situation.

You can also use this guide as reference material when you act as a facilitator during your own training activities.



Remember:

This document is written in two different fonts:

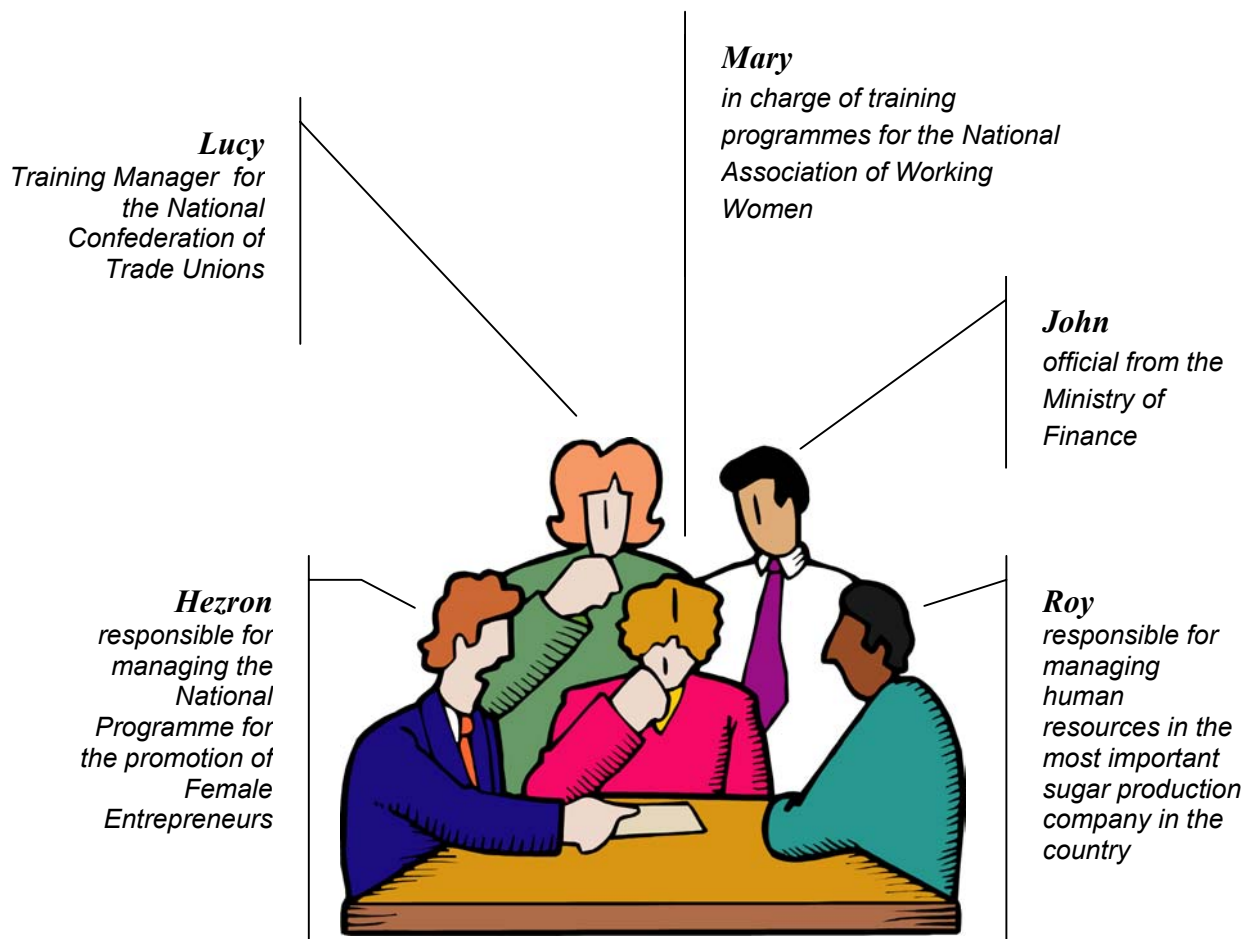
- ✓ this is the font used to describe the story of a group of colleagues who wish to learn how to facilitate awareness-raising and training activities in a specific field, namely that of introducing the perspective of gender in poverty alleviation and job creation policies;
- ✓ this is the font used in the “Guidelines for facilitators” document that the group of colleagues use to help them design, deliver and evaluate the activity.

Building consensus about gender

Some things in this story may remind you of your own situation while other things may be different.

The people and the context have been intentionally portrayed only in outline form to encourage and motivate you to fill in the details using your own story based on your own experience when you work with the modules in the guide.

Characters





The National Programme for the promotion of Female Entrepreneurs, the National Confederation of Trade Unions and the National Association for Working Women share a need for awareness-raising and training in gender-related issues. They therefore propose to implement a project to include the perspective of gender in their poverty alleviation and job creation policies.

Hezron, who is responsible for managing National Programme projects, is aware of the reality of women's work, the discrimination women suffer in terms of salary and opportunities of access to employment and also the difficulties they find in obtaining any form of credit for their businesses or micro-projects because of their general inability to offer guarantees to banks.

He will be responsible for managing the project and will work with Mary (in charge of training programmes for the National Association of Working Women) and Lucy (responsible for training at the National Confederation of Trade Unions).

Lucy is very pleased that the Confederation has decided to promote the project and take part in it. She realises that it will not be easy, because most of her colleagues are men, but she also knows that they are aware that the fact that women are willing to work under worse conditions than men reduces the contractual power of all workers.

Lucy has been working in the sector for a long time and she knows that in order to be successful and achieve the required results, the project must cover all sectors of society, in other words, private and public sectors must be involved as well as Trade Unions.

For this reason, she persuades her bosses to ask the Ministry of Finance for their participation and backing.

Lastly, John is the official appointed by the Ministry to work on the project.

Hezron has also sent a letter to the most important sugar production company in the country.

The company human resources manager, Roy, replies to Hezron and suggests a meeting.

Hezron explains to the manager his opinions on the need for a policy of equality between men and women in the workplace. He presents the results of various researches on women at work and concludes by highlighting the discrimination that arises when women try to gain access to decent employment. To obtain the co-operation of the company, Hezron explains in detail how this situation affects the national economy and reduces the potential for productive growth.

The negotiations between Hezron's programme, the company, the Confederation of Trade Unions, the National Association of Working Women and the Ministry of the Economy go on for several weeks.

In the end, an agreement is drawn up between the different parties that forms a basis for the joint work on the project between the different sectors.

The aim of the project is to design, deliver and evaluate awareness-raising and training activities in order to introduce issues of gender in the workplace.

Hezron, Roy, Mary, Lucy and John will be responsible for working on the training activities. They begin their work by discussing how best to proceed:

“The simplest, most logical approach seems to be to start from the basics, i.e. to show people that a problem exists and talk to each of them and make them think about concepts and principles that seem natural to others”.

“..yes and then we must show how these common-sense principles are reflected in the conditions of workers”.

“Awareness, we need to raise everyone's awareness: we need our colleagues to be sensitive to the problem and be aware that discrimination exists between men and women”

“and we must promote training. Adult learning is an ongoing process that can create new knowledge, attitudes and skills. Only in this way will people be able to use the new information they have been taught and adapt it to their own situations. They should be able to learn how to learn so that they can become multipliers and raise the awareness of other people and train them”.

The five colleagues know that in order to deliver training activities in their own organisations they must be able to talk to people and explain the issues to them, i.e. to facilitate the raising of awareness about the true situation at work.

The first questions to emerge are:

“What is facilitating?”

“What is a facilitator?”

“What is the difference between a facilitator and the teacher we had at school or at our educational or training establishment?”

“What are the competences of a facilitator?”

“...¿How do you facilitate a training activity? How do you design one?”

“¿how do you deliver and evaluate it?”

To facilitate means...

To support, to help other people to follow a path or carry out a process in an organised way. This is why it is necessary to design, deliver and evaluate the training activities. We could say that the main aim of facilitation is to promote changes in the way people think, form opinions and act, particularly as far as decision-making is concerned. In our case the training activities are about including the perspective of gender in poverty alleviation and employment generation policies.

These changes do not come about through the transfer of information by a specialist but by allowing people the opportunity to consider, compare, propose and act under the guidance of another person who facilitates the interaction. In other words, the members of a group have a part to play in the delivery of the training activity. They play an active role and establish links between the topics covered and the day-to-day situation that surrounds them.

In the same way, the group facilitator promotes a form of communication, of dialogue, to pave the way for permanent interaction between the participants.

This aspect is important, if we agree that in a group communication is crucial to the exchange of ideas and comparison of experiences.

The facilitator encourages everyone to take part by asking questions, eliciting opinions, respecting all the responses and discussing them. In doing so, he or she guides the group and obtains as much as possible from the individual experiences.

One important aspect for the facilitator is the management of the time available for each training activity. To achieve good results, it is important to plan the training activity carefully to achieve balance between the activities.

As part of this group communication process, the facilitator communicates information that complements the knowledge and learning already possessed by the group or that emerges from the discussion. This process leads to the collective generation of new knowledge.

This is not to say that the facilitator does not occupy a different position in the group, simply that this different position does not equate to a position of power, at least in the top-down, authoritarian sense of taking decisions. This involves making the training activity more flexible in nature, i.e. the action must be thought out and designed so that it is adapted to the needs of the participants.

Competences of the facilitator

To act as a facilitator in this project, you must possess the following competences¹:

The ability to

1. design;
2. deliver;
3. evaluate

the proposed activities.

Each of the competences may be broken down into a set of activities that we will discuss below.

1. What do you have to do to design the activities?

- Identify and analyse the target
- Identify and select the training activity mode
- Identify and select the objectives and content
- Identify and select the methods
- Identify and select the human and material resources
- Identify, select and prepare evaluation tools
- Draw up a budget

2. What do you have to do to deliver the activities?

- Promote the training activity and assemble the target
- Organise the event and adjust the design
- Facilitate the training activity
- Apply the evaluation

3. What do you have to do to evaluate the activities?

- Process the evaluations
- Prepare reports

1. Competence is:

The ability to perform an activity effectively by calling on the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to achieve the objectives established for the activity.

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How
to design,  **to evaluate,**
to deliver,
activities?