A Facilitators' Guide to Participatory Workshops with NGOs/CBOs Responding to HIV/AIDS

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Front cover: (Top) Participants at a workshop in Zambia enjoying an ice breaker exercise. (Bottom right) Participants at a workshop in Mexico engaged in a group work activity. (Bottom left) A young facilitator at a youth camp in the Philippines helps the group to explore their ideas.

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Alliance

Introduction

This guide aims to support people who facilitate participatory workshops with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) responding to HIV/AIDS in developing countries. It is based on the practical experiences of the International HIV/AIDS Alliance (the Alliance). The Alliance is an international NGO that supports communities in developing countries to prevent the spread of HIV, support and care for those infected and ease the impact of HIV on families and communities. Since its establishment in 1993, the Alliance has provided both financial and technical support to over 1,500 HIV/AIDS projects and has worked with NGOs and CBOs from over 40 countries.

The Alliance recognises that all facilitators have their own ideas and style and that this is a great strength. This guide is not a manual with step-by-step instructions. Instead, it builds on the principle that good facilitation is often the result of careful preparation, so it includes "ideas boxes", shown with a 💡, key things to remember and pieces of advice from experienced facilitators on how to respond effectively and creatively to the needs of workshop participants.

Participants from diverse backgrounds using a participatory tool together during a workshop in Brazil

Participatory approaches are widely used to encourage the involvement of those directly affected. Learning through drawing, role-plays and small group work allows people to become actively involved in the process, without worrying about their official status or their ability to communicate formally. For HIV/AIDS work these techniques can be particularly useful when exploring sensitive issues, for example people's sexual experiences, vulnerability and risk.

This guide does not attempt to explore how participatory approaches can be applied to different aspects of HIV/AIDS work. The Alliance documents this information in the form of toolkits (training manuals) on specific subjects. These toolkits include examples of participatory tools and activities which can be used to help people discuss different issues. Instead, this guide aims to be an "ideas book" of shared experiences to help facilitators prepare for participatory workshops. This guide may also be useful to people who facilitate meetings and planning activities using participatory techniques.

Further information about toolkits and other publications is available from the Alliance website: www.aidsalliance.org.

1. Understanding participatory approaches to learning

1.1 What are participatory approaches to learning?

Participatory approaches to learning are active approaches that encourage people to think for themselves. Participants actively contribute to teaching and learning, rather than passively receiving information from outside experts, who may not have local understanding of the issues. The approach encourages people to share information, learn from each other, and work together to solve common problems.

Participants at a workshop in Zambia sharing and discussing experiences openly in group work

A participant at a participatory review workshop in Bangladesh shows the results of a ranking exercise

As people become more experienced with the approach, they take increasing responsibility for planning their own learning sessions. They learn how to work together in a group. They also gain experience in using the activities and visual tools to do their own fieldwork.

Participants can bring what they have learned back to their own organisations and communities, and continue to use facilitator techniques and participatory tools locally.

Participatory learning also ultimately provides people with a framework of skills that they can use in any situation to explore issues and take action.

A participant in Ecuador sharing the results of a participatory activity and explaining how the results will be used in their future work

1.2 Why are participatory approaches used?

Participatory approaches are used in situations where a number of people must work together to resolve a common problem.

Good problem solving requires input from a variety of people with many types of experience and expertise. It also includes everyone who is interested in finding the best solution – the "stakeholders". Experience shows that when everyone contributes to the learning process, then people feel more ownership of the problem and develop more appropriate solutions for their context.

HIV/AIDS is an issue that often involves the whole community. It requires that people from international, national, regional and local organisations work together. Participatory workshops can be very effective in bringing people together, from members of local communities to national NGOs and international policy-makers.

When people at international, national and regional levels have the opportunity to learn and to work together, there can be better co-ordination of services.

The workshops can raise awareness of HIV/AIDS, as well as developing knowledge, skills and attitudes relating to HIV/AIDS. However, participatory approaches have disadvantages as well as advantages.

Advantages and disadvantages of participatory approaches to learning

☺ Advantages

✔ They use inexpensive resources.

✔ They can be used in any physical setting.

✔ They are interesting and fun – helping to involve people in the subject.

✔ They help people to build self-confidence.

✔ They help people to learn about themselves.

✔ They help people to understand the perspectives of others.

✔ Participants with different degrees of experience and literacy can use them.

✔ They prevent individuals from being singled out for what they know, or don't know.

✔ They are less intimidating for less confident participants.

✔ They can help people to analyse complex situations.

✔ Outcomes are often documented during the process and do not depend on jargon.

✔ They are memorable.

✔ Lessons learnt can be brought back to local communities or organisations.

☹ Disadvantages

✗ They are difficult to plan, because planning often depends on what the participants want to do.

✗ Involving stakeholders takes time.

✗ It can take time for people who are used to being "pupils" rather than "participants" to feel comfortable with these approaches.

✗ Facilitator techniques can be difficult to master and use effectively.

✗ They can make people feel uncomfortable, for example about drawing.

✗ They can be difficult to document in a report format but can be documented well using photographs or by keeping flipcharts.

✗ Some people may not consider them to be valid ways of working.

✗ Participants may be more focused on the creative, rather than learning, aspect of the activity.

✗ It can be difficult to establish clear action points or conclusions from the activity.

2. Facilitating a participatory workshop

2.1 Facilitator techniques

Participatory approaches use a range of techniques to facilitate learning and sharing.

When people first take part in participatory learning, they work with facilitators to learn different approaches to exploring local issues. Facilitators use various "techniques" to:

- Help people feel comfortable with a participatory approach.

- Encourage people to share information, ideas, concerns and knowledge.

- Support learning in a group.

- Help people to communicate effectively.

- Manage group dynamics.

- Keep the work practical and relevant.

- Invite the group to take control of the learning and sharing process.

Participants at a workshop in Mexico role-playing real life challenges

Facilitators ensure that everyone gets an equal opportunity to participate. Through active listening and good questioning, they demonstrate that each person's contribution is valuable. Facilitators help group members to develop communication skills by promoting discussion. Activities such as role play and case studies are used to explore different points of view.

Facilitators at a workshop in Cambodia actively listening to the work of participants

Games

Facilitators use games to help people get to know each other, to give participants more energy and enthusiasm, and to help people to work together.

Games that help people to get to know each other and to relax are called "ice breakers".

Ice breakers

✔ *Body greeting game.* Participants find a space to stand in. The facilitator shouts out a part of the body (such as knee). Everybody has to greet as many others as quickly as possible saying a greeting and using that part of the body (for example, saying "good morning" and touching knees together). The facilitator then shouts out another part of the body and the activity is repeated. As this game involves touching it may not be culturally appropriate in some countries.

✔ *This is how I feel.* Participants stand up one at a time, state their names and use an adjective, starting with the same letter as their name, to describe how they are feeling at that moment. (For example, *"I'm Nuzrat and I'm nervous"* or *"I'm Henri and I'm happy".)*

Participants at a workshop in Mexico showing that games such as "knotty problem", can be both fun and thought provoking

When people look sleepy or tired, "energisers" can be used to get people moving and to give them more enthusiasm.

Energisers

✔ *Ball Game.* Make five balls using paper and tape. Everyone stands in a wide circle. Each participant throws the ball to a different participant across the circle until everyone has caught and thrown the ball once. Ask the participants to throw the ball around the circle again in the same order until a pattern is established. Keep the pattern going and slowly introduce more balls one by one until the group is effectively "juggling" a number of balls at the same time.

Games can also be used to help people think through issues that are part of the workshop. They can also be helpful for addressing problems that participants may encounter when they are trying to work together.

Games to make people think

✔ *Knotty problem.* This game shows people that they are in the best position to solve their own problems rather than outsiders. Two people from the group should volunteer to act as health workers and are asked to leave the room. Participants form a circle, holding each other by the hand. They should then tie themselves – without letting go of the hands! – into a firm knot. The health workers are asked back in the room to untangle the knot, giving only verbal instructions to the group. After three minutes the facilitator calls stop. You will see that the health workers will not succeed in solving the problem. Ask them to join the group and repeat the exercise, this time let the group disentangle itself: this should take about 20 seconds. As a feedback, encourage people to relate the game to their own lives.

Visual tools

Facilitators can show their groups how to make visual representations (drawings or diagrams). The drawings or diagrams help participants to do many things, such as analyse problems, describe local situations, and rate the importance of things. These different learning aids are called "visual tools". The tools create a relaxed atmosphere to encourage people to work together.

Community mapping: People draw a map of their local community and mark important features, for example religious institutions, market places or schools. This is a non-threatening activity that can help people to discuss and analyse different topics that relate to HIV/AIDS.

A participant at a workshop in Morocco feeding back from a body mapping exercise
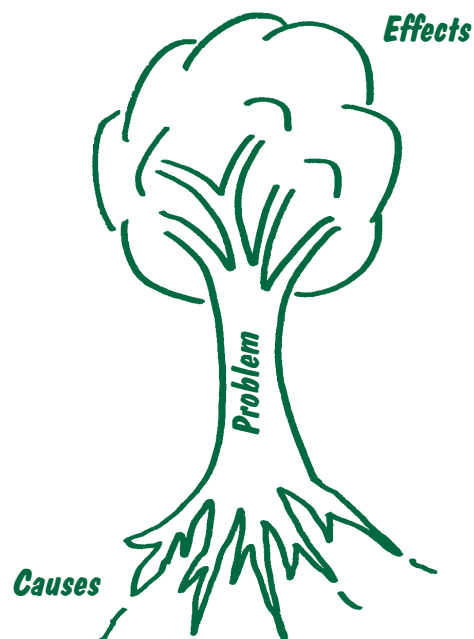
Problem trees: People draw a tree and list the causes of the problem at the roots, and the effects of the problem as the branches. This tool helps participants to break big problems down into smaller issues that can be more easily understood and addressed.

Facilitating visual tools

Facilitators can help participants to use visual tools by doing the following:

- Give very clear instructions about what you want people to do. If necessary, provide an example of what it might look like.

- Remind participants that the quality of the drawing is not important. What the drawing communicates is most important.

- Make the activities unthreatening. For example, encourage people to work in whatever way they want, such as by drawing on paper or making things out of card.

- Make the activities fun. For example, encourage participants to draw on a large scale.

- Consider the use of three-dimensional images or natural "props" – such as chairs, fruits or stones – to represent different things.

2.2 What makes a good workshop facilitator?

In a participatory workshop, the role of a facilitator is to support the learning process. The facilitator creates a supportive environment in which a "learning journey" can take place. Participants explore their own experiences and those of others, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and share their knowledge, ideas and concerns. If appropriate, a facilitator may also offer their own expertise in addition to facilitating the exchange of ideas and experience.

A facilitator does not need to be an "expert" or to be superhuman! However, they do need to have some basic professional and personal characteristics. Examples of these can be divided into three main areas: knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Facilitators do not have to have all of these characteristics. However, they should aim to have at least some from each area and to be open to developing more as they gain experience.

A facilitator at a workshop in Bangladesh helps the group to explore their ideas

Knowledge
For example:
- About HIV/AIDS.
- About NGOs/CBOs and the challenges they face.
- About the community and country context.
- About the subject matter of the workshop.

Attitudes
For example:
- Friendly and honest.
- Committed to helping people to learn for themselves.
- Gender sensitive.
- Respectful of culture, HIV status, sexual orientation and confidentiality.
- "Equal" to participants.
- Self-aware.

facilitator

Skills
For example:
- Active listening and good questioning.
- Open communication.
- Managing group work.
- Conflict resolution.
- Summarising.
- Time keeping.

2.3 What key skills do workshop facilitators need?

As shown in the diagram on the previous page, facilitators need to build a broad base of knowledge, skills and attitudes. In general, facilitators need to develop key skills in four main areas:

- Encouraging sharing and learning.
- Communicating well.
- Keeping material practical and relevant.
- Responding to group dynamics.

The following information aims to provide a "checklist" and some ideas of the techniques that facilitators use to make sure participants have the best possible learning experience:

a) Encouraging sharing and learning

Question the meaning of participants' drawings.

Questioning the meaning of drawings

Drawings can lead to useful discussions, if facilitators ask good, open-ended questions both during the process and after the drawing is finished. This questioning allows participants to explain what their drawings mean. Some useful questions include:

- What did you draw first and why?
- What is happening in the drawing? What are the consequences and for whom?
- What part of the drawing caused the most discussion in the group and why?
- What is not included in the drawing and why?

Encourage two-way communication. For example, by actively listening to people and by using open, rather than closed questions.

Active listening and good questioning

Active listening encourages the open communication of ideas and feelings – by making a participant feel not only heard, but also understood. Some tips include:

- Look at the person who is speaking – to show that you are both interested in what they are saying and that you understand.

- Pay attention to your body language – to show physically that you are listening.

- Listen to both what is said and how it is said – to pick up the emotion as well as the words.

- Summarise what you have heard – to show that you have caught the main points.

Good questioning encourages people to go beyond simply providing information – it prompts them to share their views. Some tips include:

- Ask open-ended rather than closed questions. For example: "What was the meeting like?" rather than: "Did you go to the meeting?"

- Ask probing questions. For example: "Could you explain what you meant about men not talking to their sons about sex?"

- Ask clarifying questions. For example: "Is it that people lack condoms or that they lack good quality condoms?"

- Ask questions about personal views and feelings. For example: "What do you feel about local services for STI treatment?"

- Give, and ask, for feedback. For example, after group work or presentations.

Paraphrase (or summing up). For example, to confirm people's key points.

Summing up

Summarising is an important skill for drawing conclusions and results from workshop activities. Tips include:

- State the positive points first.
- Highlight where there was agreement or differences.
- Reflect on people's comments rather than your own opinions.
- Focus on just the main points that have been made.

b) Communicating well

Be enthusiastic, calm and confident.

Talk slowly and clearly. Use language that is simple and appropriate.

Provide clear guidance and instructions. For example, for group work.

Facilitating group work

Facilitating the work of groups is about more than enabling people to exchange information and learn from each other. It is also a way to build agreement and practical skills. Some tips include:

- Be clear about the aim of the work, and agree it with the participants.
- Keep activities focused and on track.
- Encourage all group members to contribute.
- End by summarising the discussion and agreeing action points.

Be honest. Be clear about what you do and don't know.

Use positive body language. Make eye contact with all participants and be relaxed.

Make effective materials. Produce handouts for participants, prepare flipcharts or overhead transparencies with key information, and make examples to help explain activities or participatory approaches.

Display results well. Put participants' flipcharts up on the walls, on tables, or on the ground where everyone can see them.

c) Keeping the work practical and relevant

Focus on practice rather than theory. Include case studies of real NGOs/CBOs in action.

Talk about "we" and "us" rather than "they" and "them".

Link the activities to participants' own work. Ask "How could you use this in your day-to-day projects?".

Cope with power imbalances. Encourage people with different social and professional backgrounds to work as equals.

Enable participants to give each other feedback. Help people to clarify the ideas and opinions of others. Show them how to question incorrect factual statements.

Avoid crises. Deal with problems as they arise and work with the group to resolve them.

Deal positively with criticism. It is important to find a way for the participants to challenge each other constructively. Encourage discussion of the criticism, such as by asking, "*Can you explain why you feel that way?*" or "*What do others think?*"

Accept that you may not be able to please everyone all the time! Accept the fact that group members do not always have to agree on everything. It is more important that they have shared different experiences and learned from them.

Cope with judgemental attitudes. HIV/AIDS work often involves discussing issues that participants might consider wrong – such as issues about sexuality and gender. Wherever possible, these attitudes should be challenged constructively by fellow participants in light of the potential impact on their HIV/AIDS work.

Balance participation. Encourage quiet participants to speak and dominant ones to respect others.

A good group dynamic encourages these participants from the Philippines to stay interested in their activity

💡 Facilitating quiet and dominant participants

Facilitators can build the confidence of quiet participants and encourage them to become involved by:

- Encouraging them to start by speaking during small group work.

- Asking them to share their experiences in a discussion about their area of specific expertise.

- Using activities whereby all participants are asked to make a small contribution.

- Providing them with positive – but not patronising – feedback when they contribute. For example, try and build on, or reinforce, what they have said rather than say "well done" or "very good".

Facilitators can work positively with dominant participants and support them to let others make a contribution by:

- Giving them positive feedback and involving other participants in responding to them. For example, by saying "*Thank you for that interesting viewpoint. What do other people think about it?*"

- Speaking with them privately during a break to ask them to allow others more time to participate.

- Giving them a "job" to do within the workshop, for example providing the participants with a re-recap at the beginning of each day.

- Drawing their attention to established "ground rules" about allowing everyone to contribute or using games that encourage awareness of one's own behaviour.

Participants at a resource mobilisation workshop in Mexico identifying potential sources of support

3. Preparing and facilitating participatory workshops

3.1 Identifying the participants

When identifying participants, there are several issues to consider:

Choose the right number of people. You may want to have a small group (to provide intensive support) or a larger group (to have a wide range of inputs).

Find the relevant people. You may want to specify that you need participants who will be in a position to use the skills and/or train others when they return to their organisations.

Ensure the right combination of people. You might want to have participants with similar experiences to ensure equal input or a mixture to facilitate specific learning.

Aim for the right level of participation. You may want to insist that participants attend the whole workshop rather than coming and going. It should also be made clear that everyone will be required to participate.

Consult participants before planning the workshop. You may want to ask participants in advance about their expectations of the workshop, as well as their existing level of experience. Talking to participants before the workshop is planned helps to ensure that the content is at the right level, and that materials and activities are relevant for everyone.

A facilitator at a workshop in Uganda explaining the planning cycle

3.2 Selecting a facilitation team

As noted before, each facilitator needs to develop a combination of basic knowledge, skills and attitudes. The team needs to be a diverse group of individuals, who all contribute their special skills. When planning, you may want to aim for the following combination of characteristics.

- *A cross-section of people.* A diverse group of facilitators helps to ensure that there is a balance of perspectives and ideas. Ideally, the team will have facilitators from different social classes, professional backgrounds, languages and gender. The languages of the team members should mirror the different first languages of the participants.

- *"Hands on" experience in the subject matter.* If some facilitators are experienced in the subject area, then they can help everyone to deal with practical issues, such as how to put the theory into practice at a community level.

- *Technical knowledge about the subject matter.* For example, medical knowledge about HIV/AIDS treatments or legal knowledge about human rights.

3.3 Working with the facilitation team

It is important that a facilitation team works well together – both as professionals and as a group of people. Ways to build a strong team include:

- *Get to know each other as people.* You can do this by using participatory activities and tools to share information about each other. For example, by sharing timelines showing key milestones in each other's lives.

- *Get to know each other as facilitators.* Share information about your skills and the areas where you would like to develop more skill. For example, by drawing self-portraits and noting facilitation strengths down one side and facilitation weaknesses down the other.

- *Get to know each other as colleagues.* Different team members will have different working styles and preferences. These can be explored before facilitation starts, through activities such as "I love it when colleagues… / I like it when colleagues… / I hate it when colleagues…".

- *Develop a facilitation team contract.*

💡 Facilitation team contract (ground rules)

A team contract can answer key questions about how facilitators want to work together, including:

- What does the team want their workshop to be like? (For example, fun, interesting and challenging.)

- How does the team want to function together? (For example, providing mutual support, working in pairs and/or having a leader.)

- What principles are important for the team? (For example, being gender sensitive and respecting each other's strengths and weaknesses.)

- How does the team want to deal with problems? (For example, by being honest and discussing things as they arise.)

- What principles are there about contributing to each other's sessions if there are potential problems? It is always useful to have a pre-arranged signal or a way of drawing each other's attention (e.g. raise your hand and the lead facilitator can decide whether or not to call on you).

- *Get to know the subject matter together.* Read through the toolkit or other resources to develop a common understanding and clarify points that are unclear.

- *Assign roles and responsibilities.* Decide who will do what for each day and each session. Facilitators may prefer to design and conduct sessions in pairs for support. It is useful to clarify the role of the "other" facilitators when they are not actually facilitating – should they be helping group work or be available to answer questions?

- *Enable continuity.* Where possible, ensure that all the facilitators can be present during the whole of the workshop.

3.4 Planning the content of a workshop

Careful preparation for a workshop helps to build the confidence of the facilitator and ensure that participants have the best possible learning experience. The structure of the workshop must be planned, as well as the individual sessions.

The general structure of the workshop

- *Workshop opening and introductions.* To welcome people and enable participants and facilitators to get to know each other.

- *Housekeeping.* To give information about meal times, venue facilities and expenses.

- *Expectations.* To clarify participants' hopes and fears about the workshop.

- *Ground rules.* Participants develop ground rules so that everyone has a shared understanding of how people will work together. They are sometimes called a "team contract" to emphasise the fact that the rules are not imposed by the facilitators.

- *Objectives and schedule.* To outline the objectives, content, methods and timings of the workshop. Although presented at the beginning of the workshop for the participants to see, schedules are often flexible to allow the planned activities to be reviewed and changed to meet the needs and interests of the participants.

- *Energisers.* To help participants to relax and to get to know each other, and give participants more energy and enthusiasm.

- *Buzz groups.* These are small groups that can liven up the pace and gain a quick overview of participants' views.

- *Field work.* To provide an opportunity to put participants' new skills into practice.

- "*Car park*" *flipchart.* To give facilitators and participants a place to "park" issues that need to be covered at some stage, but that are not appropriate for that moment in the workshop.

- *Small and large group work.* To do participatory activities, have focused discussions and/or get a broad range of inputs.

- *Presentations.* To give information on a particular topic or to share experiences, etc..

- *Workshop recaps.* To provide a summary (usually by participants at the beginning of each day) of what has been covered so far.

- *Facilitation meetings.* To gain feedback (usually at the end of each day) about how the workshop and the facilitation have gone and to plan for the next day.

- *Follow up action plan.* For participants to clarify what concrete steps they will take after the workshop in order to use the new skills and knowledge that they have gained.

- *Workshop evaluation.* To enable participants to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the workshop.

Workshop evaluations

Workshop evaluations can be carried out by participants using questionnaires, role play, story telling, drawing or any other visual tool.

Participants can choose any aspect of the workshop to evaluate. For example:

- Facilitation.
- Methodologies used.
- Handouts/materials.
- Level of participation.
- Venue.
- Accommodation/food.
- Relevance of the topics covered.

- *Workshop closing.* The end of workshops can be official or unofficial depending on what is appropriate [see page 17]. Certificates may be expected in some countries.

- *Facilitators' debrief.* To discuss the overall strengths and weaknesses of the workshop and facilitation, and to identify improvements for the future. Debriefs are usually held each day as well as at the end of the workshop.

3.5 Preparing for individual sessions

Each session is like a mini-workshop in itself and requires thought and planning. This includes the following actions:

- *Decide the subject and aim.*

- *Identify the two or three key points to be discussed.*

- *Decide the different parts of the session.* Include an introduction to the subject of the activity and how it links with previous sessions. Select the participatory activity (tool) to be used, consider the relative importance of having time for sharing and discussion. Decide how the activity will be concluded. Also consider whether energisers, ice breakers or specific games will be necessary.

- *Allocate time for each part of the session.* To ensure that learning is achieved in the best way for the subject of the session i.e. some subjects need a lot more practice and others need more time for discussion.

- *Prepare materials.* Make, and organise, the materials that the participants and facilitators will need during activities.

- *Rehearsing sessions.* Make sure that the instructions for small group work are clear.

- *Decide on the size and composition of the groups*. Use different activities to divide people into groups.

Dividing people into groups

There are many ways to divide participants into groups. Depending on the objective of the activity it may be necessary for people to work on their own, with people from the same organisation, or in mixed groupings. Where there is no logical grouping necessary for the activity participants can be divided by:

- Random mix (for example, all those wearing brown shoes or have names beginning with the letters A to M).

- Mixing levels of work experiences (for example those with lots of experience with those with little).

- Counting 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, etc. or different fruits (e.g. apple, orange, mango) so that each group includes those that have not been sitting together.

- Mixing gender and ages (ensure that people's ages are not discussed openly if this is inappropriate).

A facilitator preparing materials for a session at a workshop in Mexico

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3.6 Making up a workshop schedule

Facilitators need to consider a number of factors when developing the schedule for a participatory workshop:

- *The length of the workshop.* You may want to have one long workshop, or two short ones with a break in between. Breaks allow people to have time to think about or try what they have learned so far.

- *The division of each day.* It is important to plan sessions around breaks and meal times. For example, in some countries three sessions are usual i.e. 1) From opening to morning break, 2) From morning break to lunch, and 3) From lunch to close of day. In other countries there may be four or more sessions. Find out what time workshop days usually end and whether participants will need to leave early on the final day to travel.

- *When different themes should be addressed.* You might want to cover the most difficult ones mid-morning when participants are most energised.

- *Balancing pace and methods.* You may want to have longer sessions at the beginning of the workshop (when people have the most to say) and lively, participatory ones in the middle and end (when participants might be tired). It is also worth balancing the kinds of activities used in each day to ensure variety. The session after lunch is usually the most difficult as the participants may feel sleepy after eating.

- *Keeping the momentum going.* Each session should provide a logical step towards the end goal.

- *Scheduling enough time for learning.* Genuine skills building during workshops takes time. You may want to schedule time to do a few sessions well rather than include too many sessions. Include some "spare time" in case sessions take longer than expected, or to address the issues in the "car park".

3.7 Dealing with logistics

Whenever possible, someone with experience should carry out the administrative and logistical arrangements for a workshop – leaving the facilitators free to focus on facilitation. However, there are a few areas where the facilitators may want to have input, including:

- *Ensuring appropriate equipment.* For example, you may need large quantities of flipchart paper or an overhead projector.

- *Developing a budget and fundraising.* It might be possible to get materials such as stationery or refreshments free from local companies.

- *Arranging for the workshop to be documented.* If it is important to have a record of the workshop then someone needs to be identified as the documenter. Make sure that it is clear what should be included in the report before the workshop.

Booking a venue that:

- *Is comfortable and in a good position.* For example, it may be useful to choose a location that is away from people's work place – to avoid distractions. Residential workshops allow participants to focus on the workshop without travelling home. They also allow the participants to get to know each other better.

- *Meets the needs of participatory approaches.* For example, you may need space for small group work or for drawing, and plenty of wall space for displaying work.

- *Can accommodate an informal layout.* For example, you may want participants to sit in a circle or semi-circle rather than in formal rows. For group work you can arrange small groups of tables and chairs or participants may prefer to work on the floor. Varying the different kinds of seating arrangements and whom people sit next to can help keep the environment lively. Be aware of cultural sensitivities when you do this.

Closing a workshop

There are many ways to close a workshop without holding an official closing ceremony. Examples include:

- *Workshop overview.* Facilitators (or participants) draw a picture to represent the activities used for each session of the workshop and ask the participants to explain what was learned during the activity, and why it is important to their work.

- *Networking game.* Ask the participants to form a circle and pass a ball of string from one person to another to form a web while stating how they can share information or work together in the future.

- *Learning ball game.* Standing in a circle ask the participant to throw a ball to another participant and say what they have learned from that person during the workshop.

- *Imaginary presents.* Divide the participants into pairs and ask them to present each other with an imaginary present which they think they would like and say a few words about working with them during the workshop. A more formal alternative is to ask the participants to present their certificates to each other and say a few words.

A group photograph at the end of a workshop in Zambia

Further reading

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International
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Supporting Community Action on AIDS in Developing Countries

USAID