PLANNING A WORKSHOP

Workshop Planning

Good workshops don't just happen they require a lot of preparation. To make a training workshop as effective as possible, a trainer should know the audience, what participants expect, as well as more specific details about the training location, and the materials which you need to have available. Workshop planning can be divided into four stages: 1) Pre-workshop Planning; 2) Designing the Workshop; 3) Carrying out the Workshop; 4) Evaluating the Workshop.

Below some guidelines are identified for the trainer at each stage of the workshop process to help run an effective workshop (drawn from Hope and Timmel III, 1995; Pretty *et al.*, 1995).

1) Pre-workshop Planning

Pre-workshop planning helps ensure the training runs smoothly and gives trainers an opportunity to research participant expectations and then tailor the training to meet the specific needs and concerns of participants and their country programme. There are several issues and tasks that need to be in this stage. Trainers need to:

- Identify the *purpose* and long-term aim of the workshop – is it to train new trainers in peacebuilding, or to help develop skills in particular peacebuilding areas?
- Identify *participants* – this may include staff or partners who are interested in peacebuilding and have some experience in training or are interested in doing training, or those who are interested in learning about a particular aspect of peacebuilding. A group of 15 to 30 people is usually optimal for training, although training groups can be any size.
- Gather *information* about the participants' needs, concerns, and hopes for the training – ask what peacebuilding skills they want to practice or programming issues they have in common. You can do this by including a questionnaire with the registration form.
- *Analyse* the information that participants give to design your training, focusing both on concerns and the level they wish to work at. Adapt the training curriculum to reflect their expectations and context.
- Plan the workshop *logistics* – identify a place to hold the workshop, staff needed, and the length of time required. Try to avoid planning workshops on major holidays or at particularly busy times of the year for participants!

2) Designing the Workshop

Once the trainer gathers and analyses the country's programme vision for the training and the participants' needs, concerns and hopes, the workshop can be designed to meet those needs. Some basic considerations for training design include:

- Giving participants an opportunity to get to know each other and feel comfortable within the group (see Module 1).
- Using several training methods to meet a variety of learning styles (see Section 3.2 Training for Adults).
- Incorporating a common experience – or several, depending on the length of the workshop – that participants can draw on and link to their previous experiences. Common experiences provide something concrete that all the participants can relate to, and engage in energetic discussions about. If participants come from the same programme, they already have common experiences on which you can ask them to draw. If participants don't know each other, case studies, role-plays, parables, or other group activities inside and outside the workshop setting create common experiences.
- Allowing time for participants to share information with each other, either during plenary or group work.
- Giving participants ample opportunity to reflect on their experience.
- Giving participants time to plan future action (for example see Exercise 6.5 Visioning the Future in Module 6)

3) Carrying out the Workshop

The purpose of all the planning is to run an effective and fruitful workshop from which participants leave feeling energised and carrying new ideas for effective peacebuilding programming. Following a relationship-centred and participatory model of training means that the training should focus on participants and elicit their knowledge, generate analysis, and plans for action. Facilitation and training skills are the focus of Section 3.5, Group Dynamics. However, some general suggestions regarding the actual workshop are:

- Check on logistical details before the workshop starts. These details can range from snacks to the materials needed for exercises occurring that day, such as flip chart paper, newsprint, markers, or handouts.
- Know and follow your workshop plan, but be flexible in following it. Be prepared to make adjustments and changes to meet the group's needs as they emerge. Integrate exercises from Sections 3.4 and 3.5 (e.g. Enhancing Group Dynamics or Energising

the Group) that enhance your workshop plan.

- Use mistakes as learning experiences. Everyone makes mistakes. When they happen use them as an opportunity for group and individual learning rather than leaving them as just a negative experience.

4) Evaluating the Workshop

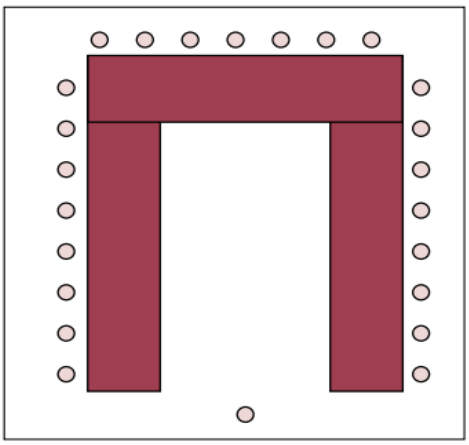
Workshops are learning experiences for participants and trainers. Giving participants an opportunity to evaluate the event allows them a chance to express their feelings and can be very valuable for the trainers, particularly if they are not defensive about getting feedback. Section 3.6 Training Evaluation provides ideas for effective evaluations. Evaluations can be conducted at the end of a short training, mid-way through a longer training and at the end, or daily, depending on your preferences and ability to gauge the group's level of engagement and learning.

Room Set-up

How the room is arranged has a big influence on the training experience. For example, if people are sitting in rows, like classrooms are often structured, they naturally direct their attention and questions to the trainer at the front of the room, the person with whom they have eye contact. This doesn't encourage discussion amongst participants. While many arrangements are possible, three suggestions are provided below (adapted from Pretty *et al.*, 1995). Please note, if participants are from opposing sides of a violent conflict they may feel uncomfortable sitting in a circle at the beginning of the training. Also, seating arrangements are affected by cultural context, and some arrangements may be more preferable than others. It is important to be aware of your context. If you are using the same room for several days, encourage participants to change seats or change the room set-up to help energise people.

1) Hollow U

This set up has tables set up in a large U-shape, with participants sitting only on the outside of the tables.

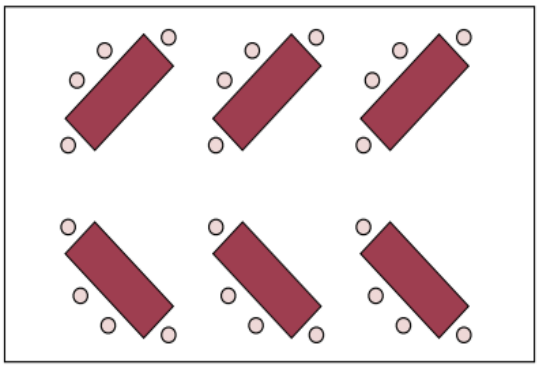


The *advantages* of this set-up are that the trainer has eye contact with all participants and can move around amongst them easily.

The *disadvantages* are that participants don't all have eye-contact, fewer people fit in the room and chairs need to be moved for breaking out into small groups.

A variation of the Hollow U is to set the tables up as a hollow V. The advantages of this setup are the same as for the U-shaped table arrangement with the additional benefit of having all participants able to make contact with each other and the trainer. The disadvantages are similar to the u-shape in that fewer people fit in the room and the chairs need to be moved for breaking into small groups.

2) Fishbone

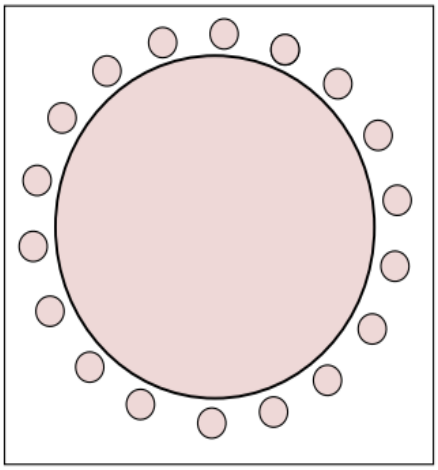


This set-up has tables arranged individually, with participants sitting on three sides of the table, with chairs facing the front of the room, where the trainer is.

The *advantages* here are that participants are already arranged in groups, which allows a trainer to easily move from mini-lectures to group work and discussions.

The *disadvantages* are that participants don't all have eye contact, fewer people fit in the room, and if tables are too long, participants at the ends may feel left out.

3) Circle



For a circle set-up, chairs or chairs around tables are arranged in a full, or almost full, circle.

The *advantages* are that participants have full eye contact, there is no natural focal point, which makes it very egalitarian, it is easy to move from lectures to group work and discussions, and if there are no tables, people do not necessarily sit in the same place repeatedly.

The *disadvantages* are for large groups, where there is a lot of distance between participants looking across the circle, or if there are no tables, there are no flat surfaces to work on and the openness can intimidate more shy people.

Other things to be aware of in setting up a room are: the amount of natural light, noise levels from adjoining rooms or outside that may distract participants, having a separate space for breaks, and adequate space and resources for visual aids, such as flip chart paper or transparencies.

TRAINING FOR ADULTS

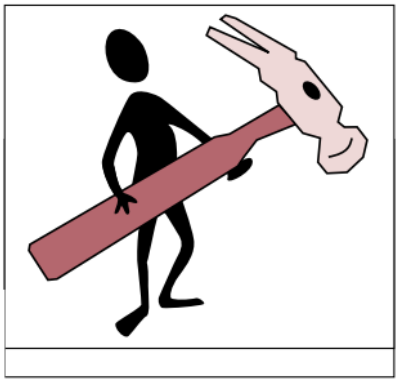
Principles of Adult Learning

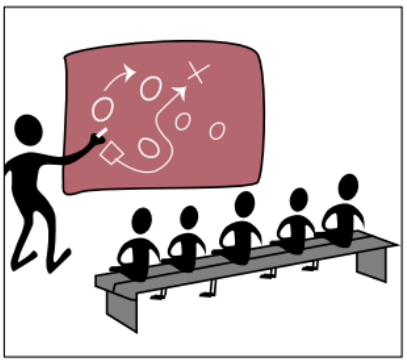
The following principles (adapted from Pretty *et. al.*, 1995, pp.2-4) are central to the way adults learn:

1) **Voluntary:** Adults are voluntary learners. They learn best when they are personally motivated to attend a particular training and usually want something in particular out of a training session or workshop.
2) **Self-motivation:** Adults usually intend to learn from a training. If this intention is not supported in the way the training is done, they will lose their motivation to participate.
3) **Opportunity for sharing:** Sharing the experiences of participants and trainers enhances the learning environment. The participants in these training sessions will all have substantial experience in peacebuilding, and sharing will enhance the collective wisdom of the group.
4) **Active involvement:** Adults learn best in a participatory atmosphere where they are actively involved in the learning process.
5) **Real-world application:** Adults learn best in a real-world environment where what they learn in a training can be immediately applied and translated to their own daily and work lives. This also generates the desire to act upon what individuals learn.

To learn, adult participants need concrete experience, abstract conceptualisation, active experimentation, and reflective observation. This manual employs all four abilities. The cartoons in the accompanying boxes illustrate the use of these four abilities.

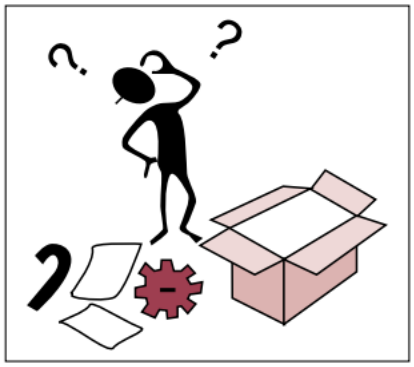
For example, participants will bring their own experiences as development workers, church workers, community leaders, teachers, or in other professions to this peacebuilding training. Although these *concrete experiences* may not be explicitly peacebuilding, participants will relate new concepts and ideas to their own past experience.





Several of the modules in this manual use *abstract concepts* to describe peacebuilding and the ideas that are part of peacebuilding.

Each of these modules uses exercises and activities to allow individuals to *actively experiment* with and learn the concepts of peacebuilding.



Following each of these activities is a debriefing session, when the trainers and participants talk about the activity, what participants learned, how they felt, or how they interacted with others during the activity. This is a crucial element of reflective observation.

This cycle of action and reflection is also called praxis. An interactive training creates an atmosphere in which participants discover and apply concepts for themselves. For example, in debriefing activities, trainers ask participants to make observations and draw out lessons based on their own experiences, rather than searching for "right" or "wrong" answers. Acquiring the skills to be an interactive and elicitive trainer takes time and practice. So don't worry if you don't already have or develop all the skills right away! With time, you will develop your own praxis.

Multiple Sources of Intelligence

People not only learn in different ways but also are able to digest that information in various ways. Howard Gardner (1983; cited in Wien and Swanson, 2000) proposes that individuals have seven ways of processing information, which he calls *multiple intelligences.* Some people are "word smart." They have a good vocabulary and are very good at expressing themselves verbally. Others are "picture smart." They are able to mentally visualise concepts and understand images. People have abilities in each of these areas, but may be stronger in one or two areas than the others. A good trainer is able to tap into multiple intelligences to help people process information.

1) People with linguistic intelligence are *"word smart"* and possess excellent language abilities and auditory skills.
2) People with logical-mathematical intelligence are *"logic smart"* and tend to think logically, numerically, and in sequence.
3) Spatially intelligent people, or "*picture smart*" people, are able to mentally visualise and manipulate images easily.
4) Musically intelligent people, or "*music smart*" people, are able to hear, appreciate, and play music easily – they are very sensitive to sounds.
5) People who have bodily kinaesthetic intelligence, or who are "*body smart,*" are good athletes and have physical skills and fine motor coordination – they are able to process information through body movement (e.g., dramatic interpretation or sculpting) and "gut feelings."
6) People with interpersonal intelligence are "*people smart*" individuals who relate well to other people.
7) Finally, people with intrapersonal intelligence, or who are "*self smart,*" are self-motivated and know themselves and their strengths and weaknesses – they are inner-directed.

People may possess more than one of these sources of intelligence. In planning a training, trainers need to provide opportunities for individuals to use all of these various intelligences to help them gain the most out of their training experience.

Training Techniques

There are many ways to either elicit participants' ideas on a particular subject or to present material and get participants actively involved in discussions. Often people's attention begins to drift after 20 to 30 minutes of straight lecture presentations. Mixing up how material is presented and how participants engage with material is extremely beneficial. Some useful methods for training are role-plays, "hot seating," case studies, simulation exercises, brainstorming, buzz groups, tableaux, story-telling, visual diagrams and maps, and icebreakers.

Role-plays allow participants to actively explore issues by acting out specific assigned roles. They are excellent opportunities for allowing people to practice skills and put strategies into action without focusing too heavily on the details of a situation. For role-plays to be successful, participants need to be willing to take an active part, which some participants may be reluctant to do. As participants become more comfortable with each other and with role-playing, they will become more active participants. The focus of the role-play can be on the individual roles, where participants learn to explore an issue from another

person's point of view, or it can focus on developing skills within group interactions, such as listening skills. Once the role-play is complete, the facilitator helps participants and observers process the experience by asking questions that highlight central themes and dynamics. This *debriefing* time is crucial to the learning value of role-plays. Debriefing allows individuals to defuse and talk about the emotions they might have experienced during the role-play, to think about what they learned as well as how they might act differently in the future.

Facilitators can *hot seat* participants, which includes stopping the role-play and asking questions of the role-players who remain in their roles to answer the question. This "hot seat" technique can help further develop participants' understanding of their characters and help move the role-play along if participants are stuck over an undisclosed piece of information (Macbeth and Fine, 1995). As a facilitator, you either take on an additional role (e.g. as a character like a military commander or government official who wants to know more about what the group is doing). Another alternative is to interrupt the role-play and ask participants to step out of role. You should let participants know that you are stopping the role-play and entering as facilitator. This is useful when emotions are intense or you sense high levels of frustration with how the role-play is progressing. Be sure to indicate when the role-play begins again and participants should return to their role.

Case studies provide participants with the opportunity to examine a particular scenario. Cases are often short written descriptions of either real or fictional situations that participants read, analyse, and discuss. Case studies should be related to issues and situations that participants are concerned with, and include problems they face. Often using a fictional setting, or a setting that participants are not intimately involved in, helps participants analyse it without getting stuck in arguments about the details of the case. Case studies always lack information. In introducing the case study, point out that in real life we don't have all the information. In both instances, we need to do the best we can with the information we have. Appendix B provides case studies from each Caritas region, which can be used as alternatives to materials provided in the skills exercises.

Simulation exercises are a variant of case studies and role-plays. Participants act out roles similar to role-plays, but make decisions and face the consequences in real time. Like role-plays, participants need to be actively engaged in simulations to make them successful learning tools. Simulations also need to be processed with participants to identify issues and experiences that parallel their real life experiences and discuss insights that emerge. As with role-plays, the importance of *debriefing* cannot be over-emphasised.

Brainstorming is a process that collects the ideas of a group fairly quickly. The purpose is to gather as many ideas as possible in a short time period. Participants call out their suggestions and someone writes them down for everyone to see. Creativity is encouraged

in this format, and participants' suggestions should not be judged or evaluated during the process. After the brainstorming session participants can further discuss and evaluate the ideas that participants generated during the session. Brainstorming works well with large and small groups.

Buzz groups refers to small group discussions that fill the room with noise as each group discusses specific questions amongst themselves. Buzz groups can range in size, but the important thing is to be small enough to allow each participant an opportunity to speak. Participants can exchange ideas, draw on their experiences, and generate new ideas and opinions. The facilitator's role is to manage the buzz groups' feedback, listen to some of the discussions, and assess where participants are at, and watch the time. The buzz groups can report back to the whole group parts of their discussion, or randomly shout out suggestions to the whole group (Pretty *et al.*, 1995). Buzz groups make use of "people smarts."

"The Kingdom of God is not a matter of eating or drinking, but of justice, peace and joy that is given by the Holy Spirit. Whoever serves Christ in this way pleases God and wins the esteem of men. Let us, then, make it our aim to work for peace and to strengthen one another."

(Roman 14:17)

The size of buzz groups can vary according to the level of participation you want or your purpose of the small group discussion. Usually, the larger the group, the less individual members of the group will participate, and the more discussion time you will need to give the groups. In general, use *pairs* for interviewing, practicing skills, or more intimate sharing. Use groups of 3 for testing ideas before presenting them to the entire group or when you want each member of the group to participate. It is difficult to remain quiet in a *group of 3*. Use *groups of 4, 5, or 6* for planning, discussing more complex situations, and to introduce more variety into the discussion. Use *groups of 6-12* when you have ample time to discuss. Groups of this size usually need someone to animate or facilitate the discussion (Hope and Timmel II, 1995, pp.10-11).

Tableaux are frozen pictures in which participants use their bodies to construct or portray a particular idea or situation without using words. Tableaux can be created by small or large groups of people. For example, participants can portray what justice or peace means to them (see Module 2, Exercise 2.5 Truth, Justice, Peace, Mercy). The picture can be frozen, or moving if participants would prefer. Moving pictures are often called *sculpting* instead (see Module 3, Exercise 3.10 Sculpting Relationships). This training method allows participants to express ideas and feelings without having to verbally describe them and takes advantage of body smarts.

Storytelling through *dramas, parables or rituals* are ways of getting participants to engage with more than just logic. Dramas, parables and rituals encourage us to use the creative part of our brain and can tap our emotions more easily. Storytelling also allows participants and trainers to discuss issues that might be very sensitive without naming them (for example, see Module 2, Exercise 2.3 Jacob and Esau or Module 4, Exercise 4.2 Parable –

The Child and the Garden). Storytelling takes advantage of word smarts or musical smarts.

Visual diagrams or **maps** are good ways of encouraging participants to think creatively about the linkages between concepts, parties or programmes. For example, participants can map a conflict, highlighting how parties are related to each other

The Who, What and How of Conflict). These visual aids can complement other forms of analysis. These mapping exercises use picture smarts.

Icebreakers are exercises designed to break the ice among participants. They are especially useful at the beginning of training sessions, when participants do not know each other. See Module 1 for a list of useful icebreakers.

In all of these training methods, the trainer's role is to explain the activity, encourage participants, and facilitate discussions afterwards, listening to what participants have to say and helping elicit comments to get the most out of the exercise.

In order to become more comfortable with these various training techniques try planning a sample workshop as a *suggested exercise*. For example, in groups of 3-4 people, pick a concept from one of the modules that you are familiar with, and plan two or three ways of presenting the concept to participants.