

6 Outline of the training materials

To provide a coherent structure, the training materials are presented in an order and format similar to those used in the Disability Equality Training of Trainers programme in Kosovo in 1997. Most of the activities had been used previously in other contexts, for example in Disability Equality or capacity-building workshops with aid-agency staff, women's groups, community groups, and other disabled people's organisations. Some of the activities were used only in those contexts, and not in the DETOT course, but they are included in this manual in order to broaden out the scope and choice of activities. It is intended that users of this manual will pick and choose activities to suit their own needs and circumstances, rather than follow the complete agenda. The workshop activities are organised in the following way.

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From this range of activities it should be possible to construct workshops, seminars, discussion groups, and so on for a variety of participants – expatriate and local staff of international NGOs and agencies, staff of national or local organisations, government representatives, members of disabled people’s organisations (DPOs), members of the community, etc. Most activities are applicable (with some modification) to all these potential participants. Some specifically focus on one particular group: where this is the case, we make it clear and we offer alternatives for other groups.

The materials cover the main issues relevant to the twin topics of facilitation skills and Disability Equality. But they are not exhaustive: many other interesting topics could be added. And of course the approach that was adopted is only one way to do training. It is important for facilitators to bear in mind, and to stress with participants, that there is no single ‘right’ way. It is vital for the facilitator to find the approach that she or he is comfortable with and that is suitable for the group.

Each activity in the manual is presented step by step, together with its objectives and/or learning points and notes for facilitators. We suggest how much time to allow for each activity, but of course the duration will vary, depending on the size of the group and whether or not an interpreter is used. We have tried to make the materials as self-explanatory as possible, so that facilitators with a broad range of experience will find them easy to use.

Some topics are presented in the form of a discrete and self-contained session, with a specific structure and logic which could be followed without modification. Other topics are more loosely structured, and it is not intended that all the activities will be done in one workshop, nor that they will necessarily be done in the order presented. In some sections we have suggested links between particular sessions or activities, to show inexperienced facilitators how to lead from one to the next. This helps to reinforce the learning process and keep people engaged.

Chapter 8, 'Facilitation skills', is designed with a particular focus on members of disabled people's organisations, because in the long term they are ultimately best qualified to take on the role of training others in disability awareness and rights-based work. However, this chapter should be of use to other facilitators too, whatever their level of experience, and many of the activities are suitable for various group-work situations, not just the training of trainers.

The activities in the manual vary considerably in their levels of complexity, in terms both of the concepts and issues covered, and the facilitation methods involved. Again, the idea is that facilitators should choose the activities that are most appropriate for their participant group and their particular circumstances (including the availability of materials), and adapt them where necessary.

Most of the activities can be used with a broad range of participants, irrespective of their levels of education. Facilitators should beware of oversimplifying concepts – especially when participants lack formal education – because this is patronising and risks reinforcing negative assumptions. It may be necessary to find an appropriate way to explain jargon and specialist terminology, to avoid or modify it, but don't underestimate participants' ability to understand and apply the underlying concepts.

Some of the activities require a certain level of literacy, but facilitators might be able to substitute symbols or objects for words in these cases. Other activities which require reading, writing, or drawing can be done with the help of partners or an appointed person in each small group. The activities are generally suitable for groups of people with a broad range of physical and sensory impairments, but they may require further adaptation, depending on the needs of individual participants. For some of the activities we suggest specific alternatives to take into account additional or different impairment-related (or literacy-related) access needs. In addition, general guidelines for making the workshop environment and activities accessible are given in the next chapter (*7.12 Access! Access! Access!*).

Note that none of the activities features the simulation of impairments or disability, in which for example non-disabled people wear a blindfold, or have their hearing

blocked, or are required to spend time using a wheelchair; nor are disabled people required to simulate an impairment different from their own. The reason for this deliberate omission is that such simulation activities give a very unrealistically negative impression, which can reinforce prejudices and stereotypes. With blindfolds, for example, people crash into things and feel disoriented and helpless, but this is not the reality for most people with impaired vision. DPOs recommend that if participants need to know what it is like to have a particular impairment or to experience disablement by society, it is best for a workshop facilitator (or a guest speaker) who has experience of that impairment to talk and answer questions about it.

This manual makes considerable use of handouts, flipcharts, and verbal presentations, but these are suggestions, not prescriptions: if they are not appropriate, you should devise your own alternatives. Different people learn differently: even within an apparently cohesive participant group, there will be some people who depend on handouts and some who don't find them helpful at all. It is good to have handouts available, but they are not essential. On the other hand, for courses designed to train trainers, handouts can be very useful to jog the memories of participants after the session, and as the basis for activities or discussions in future group-work that they will themselves facilitate.

Wherever possible, use locally available objects, equipment, and stationery. For example, for writing on flipcharts in Kosovo we used very cheap, locally available packaging paper, but in most cases a blackboard and chalks would have been just as good.

The DETOT course relied heavily on participative learning methods. Participants in your groups may be resistant to them, perhaps because of cultural or traditional assumptions about the best methods of teaching and learning, or because of the participants' status within their community. The only way to find out how they will react is to try! However, you can take measures beforehand to maximise the applicability and appropriateness of the workshop: get to know at least some of the participants, let them get to know you, and see how they respond to some of your ideas; seek out the opinions of others who have done group-work in the region; or consult people who have a better understanding or a different perspective on the local culture. But be prepared to take risks and to learn from your mistakes.