

# Mentoring and follow-up training

## **Mentoring process**

Developing good facilitation skills takes time. Though this initial training will help people to understand the process of good facilitation, it is only by putting ideas and tools into practice that these skills will really be learnt and retained.

People who lack confidence, or have only used or experienced a traditional teaching style, will often lapse back into more formal training methods. It is therefore important to support participants to ensure that this new learning develops and becomes a part of their approach to working with community groups.

When selecting participants, ensure that there are always two, and preferably three or four, participants working near each other. They may either work for the same organisation or live within a short distance of each other. This small group of participants should ideally include a balance of men and women of different ages. See the section on SELECTING PARTICIPANTS on page 5 for more details.

## **Peer mentoring process**

Participants may prefer to work together in twos for a couple of months as they lead discussions using the PILLARS Guides with groups in their communities. This can be a really useful support for participants who lack confidence. The participants can share responsibility for presenting the new ideas and leading the discussion.

If participants prefer to work on their own, they should make arrangements to observe each other facilitating a group discussion once a month.

Where three or four participants work near each other, they should visit a different participant each month, so that each participant observes each of the others at work. When visiting others, participants should arrive at the meeting together.

Following introductions, the visitor should simply observe the meeting. Afterwards the two should discuss how the meeting went and share any key observations that could help. Handouts 10 (page 71) and 11 (page 72) – ‘Improving your facilitation skills’ and ‘Assessing the impact on the community groups using the Guides’ – can act as useful checklists for participants to work through while observing others, and to guide their feedback.

These monthly visits should continue over six to twelve months until follow-up training is held.

## **Official mentoring process**

In addition to this peer mentoring process, training facilitators should also plan to mentor each of the participants. Until follow-up training is held, each training facilitator should plan two visits to each small group of two to four participants. During their visit (which would normally take place over two days), the training facilitator would:

- Observe each participant facilitating a discussion using a PILLARS Guide with a community group.
- Spend time with each participant individually, feeding back their observations and advising them on how they can improve their facilitation skills and overcome problems they have encountered. It may help to identify particular learning objectives for the following few months, as well as changes that the participants would like to see in the community groups.
- Bring together all the participants in the small group, to discuss their progress, review the peer mentoring process and identify any further training needs.

## Follow-up training

This should consist of a two to three day review of using PILLARS Guides with community groups. It should provide participants with the opportunity to:

- identify common challenges or problems faced, and share ideas about how these can be overcome
- reflect on the relevance of the Guides, and ways in which they can be adapted
- gain confidence in using a wider range of practical tools and techniques to encourage discussion and participation (eg: proverbs and sayings from the local culture to reinforce learning; ideas for starting and ending a discussion)
- share ideas on how to start and end a discussion, and where to access more information on different topics so that they can be explored in more depth
- reflect on how the ideas raised in discussion can lead to a practical, active response on the part of the group
- agree on a simple monitoring system for collecting information on how PILLARS Guides are being used
- identify other community members who could use PILLARS Guides, and consider how the skills and ideas from the training can be passed on to them.

Training facilitators may wish to refer back to Sessions 5–12 of the initial training for ideas on these different areas. They may also want to supplement the material with ideas from some of the resources listed in Appendix F, on page 76.

## Training of trainers

In order to multiply the skills and learning so that other members of the community groups are equipped to facilitate discussions using the PILLARS Guides, the organisation facilitating the training may wish to hold a ‘training of trainers’ workshop. This would involve bringing some of the participants of the initial training back together for two to three days, to learn how to use this training Workbook to train others in facilitation skills.