Training content

Introductory session

Aim

To encourage relationship-building with and between participants and to introduce the purpose and content of the training.

Objectives

The participants will:

■ introduce themselves

■ discuss their hopes and concerns about the training

■ establish objectives for the training

■ form committees which will take responsibility for different aspects of the training.

Materials

■ Coloured card, flipchart, marker pens.

Pre-prepared flipcharts:

1 Training objectives *(page 8)*
2 Training committees *(page 9)*

PROGRAMME

FACILITATOR'S INTRODUCTION *5 minutes*

Give a warm welcome to all participants. Introduce the training facilitators. Introduce the purpose of the training. Give any necessary administration or housekeeping notices.

INDIVIDUAL INTRODUCTIONS *25 minutes*

Pass round a box of matches. Participants take it in turn to light a match and to state their name, where they are from and the group or organisation that they work with. They are allowed to speak for only

as long as the match is alight. This can be an enjoyable way of ensuring that the introductions do not overrun, and that everyone has the same amount of time to introduce themselves.

GROUP INTRODUCTIONS *25 minutes*

Group Portrait is an activity that helps participants to find out more about each other, in a relaxed way.

■ Divide the participants and training facilitators into groups of about four or five. Ensure that each group includes men and women of different ages, where possible.

■ Ask the members of each group to sit together and to introduce themselves. They should not talk about anything too serious or anything related to their work. For example, they can ask each other about their families, what they enjoy doing in their spare time, what unusual abilities or skills they have, or what animal they most associate themselves with and why.

■ Give each group a piece of flipchart paper, and ask them to produce a drawing of their group which includes each group member and their names.

■ Display the charts on a wall where everyone can see. Ask one person in each group to present their drawing.

This exercise is a good way to break the ice, to get people working together and to help them remember each other's names.

HOPES AND CONCERNS *20 minutes*

In the same groups of four or five, participants will reflect on their expectations for the training. Help them to identify what they hope to learn and apply to their work by the end of the training. Encourage them to think about their different work situations and what specific concerns or difficulties they may face at present. Give each group a pen

and two sheets of different coloured card. On one piece of card, they are to write three hopes for the training. On the other, they are to write three concerns.

When they have all finished, ask one member of each group to stick their card on a piece of flipchart paper at the front and present their hopes and concerns. When each group has done this, invite other participants to add any further comments.

The training facilitators should respond, addressing any concerns that have been raised. Invite open discussion. The issues raised should be revisited at the end of the training.

Stick the Hopes and Concerns sheets on a side wall for easy reference.

TRAINING OBJECTIVES *10 minutes*

Present the training objectives on Chart 1. Ask if there are particular objectives that are not clear to participants, or if there are others that they wish to add to the training.

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1 Training objectives

That participants will have:

- understood the origins and aims of the PILLARS Guides and production process
- become familiar with the content of various PILLARS Guides and of how they can be adapted
- understood the difference between teaching and facilitating
- discussed the role of a facilitator and identified the qualities and skills of a good facilitator
- identified barriers and incentives to people's participation in a discussion or learning process, and strategies for overcoming these barriers
- practised using participatory learning and action tools to draw out the knowledge of a group
- practised and gained confidence in using PILLARS Guides with community groups
- identified how PILLARS Guides can be integrated into ongoing work.

TRAINING COMMITTEES *10 minutes*

Explain that during the training, the participants will share responsibility for different tasks. Explain the role of the different committees, listed on page 9, and check that participants understand what each committee will involve. Ideally, members of each committee should change during the training.

Worship committee

Where appropriate, lead some worship songs and a participatory Bible study before the training begins, using the studies in APPENDIX E (page 74). Begin and end each training session with prayer.

Review committee

Lead a 5–10 minute activity that reviews the learning of the previous training session. This might involve a short quiz or a game in which people have to use any new skills or ideas they have learnt. Those leading this review should avoid giving a narrative report of the whole of the previous session. The aim is to reinforce the learning and to help people focus on the content of the training.

Social committee

Lead energisers, such as songs or games, for use at relevant points during the sessions and help arrange additional entertainment that may be planned. See APPENDIX D (page 73) for ideas.

Timekeeping committee

Keep participants and facilitators to time. A bell or some kind of musical instrument could be useful here!

Stick up Chart 2 (page 9) and ask participants to put their name against at least two different committees during different training sessions.

GROUND RULES *5 minutes*

Ask the participants what attitudes and behaviour they consider to be important as they learn and work together during the training. This might include listening to each other, respecting each other's views, keeping to time. Write these down for people to refer to throughout the training. These agreed ways of working are to guide people's thinking and behaviour and encourage a sense of joint responsibility.

2 Training Committees

	Sessions 1–4	Sessions 5–8	Sessions 9–12	Sessions 13–16	Sessions 17–22
Worship					
Review					
Social					
Timekeeping					

LEARNING AND ACTION POINTS *5 minutes*

At the end of each training session it can be helpful for participants to reflect individually on what they have learnt and how they will apply it to their situation. Give each participant three coloured cards: for example, red, yellow and green. At the end of each session, they will be encouraged to write one thing on each piece of card:

■ on one card, one thing they will stop doing as a result of what they have learnt

■ on another card, one thing they will put into practice but not immediately (they may need to feed back to their organisation before deciding exactly how they can take it forward)

■ on the last card, one thing they have learnt that they will put into practice immediately.

They should use the same colour coding each time they use this method of reflecting and planning. These ideas can be shared informally with other participants, but the purpose is to help people record the learning and apply it.

Participants take time to discuss learning.

Photo: Isabel Carter, Tearfund

SESSION 2

Introduction to PILLARS

Aim

To introduce participants to the origins and aims of the PILLARS Guides and process.

Objectives

■ To provide an overview of the research that led to the development of the PILLARS Guides and process.

■ To establish the aims of the Guides.

■ To establish the target groups.

■ To familiarise participants with the different Guides available.

■ To inform participants of the different translations that are available and of the possibilities of producing further translations through the PILLARS process.

■ To explain the PILLARS process – the aim, the content of each workshop, and a summary of where it has been piloted and the learning that has resulted.

Materials

■ Copies of different PILLARS Guides and *Footsteps* (where available)

Pre-prepared flipcharts:
3   Information sources *(page 11)*
4   Sources of information on community health *(page 11)*
5   The PILLARS Guides *(page 12)*
6   The aims of the PILLARS Guides *(page 12)*
7   The PILLARS production process *(page 13)*

Handout 1 *(see Appendix C, page 62)*
The PILLARS Guides
The aims of the PILLARS Guides

PROGRAMME

THE ORIGINS OF PILLARS *20 minutes*

Explain that the idea for PILLARS developed from experience and research during the 1990s. Since 1989, the Christian relief and development agency,

Tearfund, has published *Footsteps*, a quarterly newsletter linking health and development workers worldwide, available in various national and international languages. Participants can be shown copies of this, where available.

In the 1990s, readership surveys were carried out to find out how readers were using *Footsteps* and how it could be improved. The surveys showed that many readers were sharing *Footsteps* and ideas from it within their community groups. Some readers were using it for training purposes. Others were translating articles into local languages.

Detailed research was started in 1994 in Ghana and Uganda to explore the sources and flow of ideas and information used and preferred by local people. It is sometimes said that there is no point producing printed materials for people with low levels of literacy. The research showed that this is not the case. Appropriate materials produced in local languages can be very powerful in development.

Activity *40 minutes*
DISCUSSION OF INFORMATION SOURCES

• Divide participants into groups of five or six according to their geographical area of origin or organisation.

• Ask each group to consider the questions on Chart 3 (page 11) about where people access information on health. However, if there is another topic that is more relevant to the interests and needs of the participants, such as agriculture, nutrition or credit facilities, this could be considered instead. Each group should write their answers onto Chart 4 (page 11).

• After discussion, ask each group to stick their chart on the wall. Ask the participants to compare the different answers. Discuss the differences and the similarities. Which information source do communities have the most access to? Which information source do people trust the most?

• Looking at the charts, how often do people in the communities the participants work with access *written* information, and how much do they trust it?

People's attitudes to the written word can range from distrust and fear to unquestioning acceptance. These attitudes will be affected by levels of literacy, access to and use of the written word.

3 Information sources

- Where do the communities you work with obtain information on health?

  List five different sources of information in the first column of Chart 4, eg: health centre, community health worker.

- How much access do these communities have to these different sources of information?

  List them in order of priority in the second column of Chart 4, giving each information source a number between 1 and 5, where 1 indicates the least access and 5 the greatest access.

- How much do people in the communities you work with trust these different sources of information, and why?

  List them in order of priority in the third column of Chart 4, giving each source a number between 1 and 5, where 1 indicates little trust and 5 indicates the greatest amount of trust. For example, they may trust community health workers because they have training and experience.

4 Sources of information on health

Information source	Access	Trust
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Explain that for some people, this is a time of instant communication – the information age. Television, computers and other technologies bring information into their homes and places of work from all around the world.

But for many other people there is still an information famine. They have little or no access even to newspapers or the radio. This is especially the case for those who:

- are not literate
- live in remote areas
- do not speak a national or international language
- do not have the money to buy information sources such as books, a radio, computer or television.

People who feel left behind in the information age may also feel that they have little to offer; no-one wants to listen to their ideas. They have to rely on local information sources, especially those within their community.

The PILLARS approach seeks to improve access to information from outside the local community, and to encourage the local generation and sharing of ideas.

THE PILLARS GUIDES *25 minutes*

Put participants back into the same groups of five or six. Pass round all available copies of the PILLARS Guides. Give each group ten minutes to consider the following questions:

- What does PILLARS stand for?
- Give the titles of three PILLARS Guides
- What do you think are the aims of the PILLARS Guides?

Ask the groups to feed back their ideas. Give out Handout 1 (see Appendix C, page 62) and present Chart 5 (page 12) for discussion.

Explain that the Guides are designed for use in small group situations where one or more people are literate and can confidently lead others in discussion. They can be used with any group of people who meet regularly, such as youth groups, women's groups, farmers' groups and literacy groups. Ideally just one or two double pages should be used each time the group meets, allowing plenty of time to discuss the issues raised and carry out some of the practical ideas suggested. Only one person in each group needs to have a copy of a Guide, and only one needs to be able to read. However, if the group wishes to strengthen their

5 The PILLARS Guides

PILLARS stands for
Partnership In Local LAnguage ResourceS

The Guides are designed for use in small community groups, eg: youth groups, women's groups, farmers' groups, literacy groups.

One person acts as the facilitator, and leads the group in discussions and activities based on the Guides.

The Guides below are currently available in English (E) and French (F), with most also available in Spanish (S) and Portuguese (P):

- *Building the capacity of local groups*
  (E, F, S, P)
- *Improving food security* (E, F, S)
- *Credit and loans for small businesses*
  (E, F, S, P)
- *Agroforestry* (E, F)
- *Preparing for disasters* (E, F, S, P)
- *Mobilising the community* (E, F, S, P)
- *Healthy eating* (E, F, S, P)
- *Mobilising the church* (E, F, S, P)
- *Responding more effectively to HIV and AIDS* (E, F, S, P)

Some are also available in other national and local languages. A full list is available on Tearfund's learning website, www.tilz.info

6 The aims of the PILLARS Guides

The PILLARS Guides aim to:

- encourage group members to share their knowledge and experience and to learn from each other
- help people learn and adopt new ideas and skills by discussing the information presented
- encourage and enable a practical response to the information
- build the confidence of the group and its individual members as they have access to printed and relevant discussion-based information in their local language
- encourage a group learning process that equips a group to initiate and manage change
- strengthen the literacy skills of the group.

Training facilitators should explain that the Guides will only achieve these aims if the group discussions are led by someone who encourages the group members to share their knowledge and experience and to learn from each other. He or she should be able to accompany the group over time through this learning process. This person is the group facilitator. Later sessions will look at the role of the facilitator in more detail, and at the skills, characteristics and strategies the facilitator needs in order to lead a group effectively.

TRANSLATION OF THE GUIDES *5 minutes*

Explain that the PILLARS Guides are designed to be easily translated and adapted to different local contexts. The Guides use simple language and as little technical information as possible. The design files are available on a CD-ROM, and translated text can simply be typed over the existing text and the illustrations retained. However, new illustrations showing people, clothing, vegetation and physical structures that would be found in the local context can make the Guides even more relevant and attractive to readers.

The Guides have been translated and new Guides written in over 30 national and local languages, either by individual trained translators, or by groups of development workers during a PILLARS training

literacy skills, it is helpful to have more than one copy available to the group. The Guides can also be used during training workshops. The group should gradually work through the whole Guide together and identify ways to use what they have learnt to make positive changes which help them achieve their aims as a group or improve life in the wider community.

Using Chart 6, explain that the Guides aim to increase the knowledge, skills and confidence of group members by introducing discussion-based information on a community development issue, so that the group can successfully manage change within their own situation without depending on outside intervention. This Chart is also included on Handout 1.

process. These languages include Hindi (India), KiSwahili (East Africa), Burmese (Myanmar), Mandarin (China), Yoruba (Nigeria) and Mooré (Burkina Faso).

THE PILLARS PRODUCTION PROCESS
15 minutes

Using Chart 7, explain that the PILLARS production process is a new approach to producing written information. The aim of the process is to stimulate the sustained production of written materials in languages that are useful to local people. This is achieved through training a group of church, community or development workers in translation, writing and facilitation skills and establishing a Regional Language Committee to sustain the production and use of PILLARS Guides. The PILLARS production process is not just about translating information produced by other people in international languages. It is about helping local people develop the confidence and skills they need to record and share their own ideas and experiences. It is also about encouraging pride in the local language and giving value to local knowledge and culture.

The training brings together 20 to 25 development workers for three five-day training workshops over a period of 9 to 15 months. The first workshop

Group translating a PILLARS Guide, Ethiopia.

Photo: Sophie Clarke, Tearfund

introduces participants to the aims of the PILLARS Guides and production process and equips them with facilitation and translation skills. They apply these to a group translation of a selected PILLARS Guide. Participants field-test this translation with local community groups. Following the first workshop, they pilot a draft of the Guide in their own local communities. They also conduct a baseline survey to find out the information needs and priorities of the communities. During the second workshop, participants translate a second Guide and choose a topic for a new Guide. During the third workshop, they write this Guide, form a committee and plan how they will use and continue to produce PILLARS Guides.

The PILLARS process has been piloted in Uganda, Southern Sudan, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Myanmar, Ethiopia and Brazil. In Ethiopia, the process has been conducted with a refugee group who have found it a powerful way of restoring their sense of identity as a displaced people group. It helped guide them in a participatory planning process as they prepare to return to their own country.

There is a separate workbook available for organisations interested in using this process to translate and write new PILLARS Guides in local languages. Copies can be obtained from Tearfund (see Appendix F for the address).

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7 The PILLARS production process

- A new approach to producing written information, in local languages, that is useful to local people.
- It is based around three training workshops of five days each, over a period of 9 to 15 months.
- The training is aimed at development, health, literacy or church workers, who are willing and able to produce and facilitate discussions with local groups using PILLARS Guides, over a sustained period of time.
- The training has been piloted in different countries and contexts.

SESSION 3

Overview of the PILLARS Guides

Aim

For participants to familiarise themselves with the content of the different PILLARS Guides available and the different ways in which they can be used.

Objectives

- To learn about the topics and content of different PILLARS Guides.

- To identify the distinctiveness of the Guides in terms of the content, design and language used.

Materials

- Two or three different PILLARS Guides for each group, including *Mobilising the community* and *Building the capacity of local groups* where available

- Flipchart paper, marker pens

- Pre-prepared flipcharts:
  8   Questions on the PILLARS Guides *(page 14)*
  9   The PILLARS Guides and their format *(page 15)*
  10 The use of the PILLARS Guides *(page 16)*

- Handout 2 *(see Appendix C, page 63)*
  The PILLARS Guides and their format

PROGRAMME

Activity 1 *25 minutes*
QUESTIONS AND FEEDBACK

• Divide participants into groups of four or five. Ask each group to work through the questions on Chart 8. Choose one person in each group to take notes. Encourage each participant to share their views.

• Ask each group to give feedback on each question, sharing a maximum of three ideas for each.

8 Questions on the PILLARS Guides

Looking at two or three different PILLARS Guides, answer the following questions:

- What is the difference between the PILLARS Guides and other books you have used as training materials? Think about:
  · the topics
  · the type of language used
  · the design.

- What do you think is the purpose of:
  · the main text?
  · the illustrations?
  · the discussion questions?
  · the Bible studies?

9 The PILLARS Guides and their format

CONTENT OF GUIDES

- One single theme, divided into 20–24 topics of a double page each.
- Bible studies relating to the text.

CONTENT OF EACH DOUBLE PAGE

Each topic includes **text**, an **illustration** and **discussion questions**.

Text

AIM – to introduce new ideas.

- A short, simple title, not longer than one line, summarises the message of the double page.
- Between 75 and 150 words, divided into short paragraphs.
- Simple words, avoiding the use of long and difficult terms or jargon.
- Large print.

Illustrations

AIM – to reinforce the message of the text, aid memory, be attractive to users, communicate meaning of double page to those who are not literate. The illustrations:

- are adapted to the region
- are clear and understandable
- avoid using difficult symbols
- use the same style throughout the Guide.

Discussion questions

AIM – not to check understanding, but to relate the information to the lives of the users; to draw out and build on existing knowledge.

- Several open questions (who, what, why, when, how, where) that encourage people to share their experience of the topic being addressed, and encourage group discussion.
- Include practical exercises to illustrate a new idea and help groups to apply the learning.

BIBLE STUDIES

AIM – to link God's word with practical development-related information, and encourage the group to apply biblical principles to their development work.

- Several questions on a passage relating to a particular topic.

THE PILLARS GUIDES AND THEIR FORMAT *20 minutes*

Present Chart 9, summarising the nature and purpose of the different sections of each Guide. Where points have already been raised during feedback, refer back to the group's answers rather than presenting them as new ideas. In this way, the knowledge and the ideas of the group act as the starting point, which models the intended approach of the PILLARS discussions. The chart can then be given out as Handout 2 (page 63).

Explain that each double page of a Guide can be used on its own, as it addresses a different topic. However, the Guides are designed in such a way that each double page builds on the page before. Some key ideas are repeated or presented in a slightly different way, to help people understand and learn from the material and have time to reflect on how it applies to their situation. Ideally, a group should work through a whole PILLARS Guide. They should look at one double page together each time they meet and start the next discussion with a summary of the last topic before moving on to the next one. They should also keep a record of their learning, plans and their subsequent action.

The Guides are designed for local community groups. The language is simple, with many illustrations and discussion questions to help users understand the ideas and apply them to their contexts. Some Guides will be more relevant to certain groups than others. This will depend on the group in question: on their needs, interests and aims as a group. Before deciding which Guide to use, each group should be clear about what they want to learn and how they want to use this learning. They can then decide which Guide will be most relevant and can develop their own learning aims for the discussion process.

Activity 2 *1 hour*
READING AND DISCUSSING PILLARS

• Ask participants to work in the same groups, and to imagine themselves taking part in a meeting of a local community group such as a women's, farmers', literacy or credit group. Ask the group to read through one of the following double pages from *Building the capacity of local group*s: Waiting for change (A1), or from *Mobilising the Community*: Understanding the purpose of a group (C1) or Group members (C11).

• Ask them to consider the two questions in Chart 10. The first refers to the PILLARS material being discussed. The second refers to the discussion process. It is important that the participants reflect not only on the relevance of the PILLARS materials, but also on how to encourage all members of the group to participate in discussion and learn from the new ideas presented.

• Ask each group to choose a different person to share their answers.

Photo: Isabel Carter, Tearfund

Discussing potential uses of PILLARS Guides, Brazil.

Summarise the learning by saying that the aim of the discussion-based approach is to draw out the knowledge and experience of individual group members. However, this will only happen if the discussion is well facilitated. This type of learning is appropriate for adult learners, who bring their own personal knowledge and experience to any learning process. It is also appropriate for a community development intervention which seeks to put local people at the centre of any process of change, and to start from their own knowledge, needs and priorities.

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10 The use of the PILLARS Guides

1 Do you think this material is appropriate for your target communities? Think about:
   • the language used
   • the illustrations
   • the discussion-based approach.

2 Reflect on the discussion you had as you read through a double page together.
   • Did anyone lead the discussion?
   • Did everyone participate?
   • Did you feel comfortable sharing your ideas in the group?
   • What could have encouraged more people to share their ideas?

SESSION 4

The Knowledge Debate

Aim

To debate the issues behind the value of different people's knowledge in a way that is enjoyable, challenging and thought-provoking.

Objectives

The participants will:

■ prepare and present a case either for or against the question for debate (from two different viewpoints)

■ gain awareness of using debate as a teaching tool

■ gain awareness and understanding of the need to value both local and outside knowledge when encouraging participation in development.

Materials

Pre-prepared flipcharts:
11 The Knowledge Debate 1 *(page 17)*
12 The Knowledge Debate 2 *(page 18)*
13 Sharing knowledge *(page 18)*

PROGRAMME

INTRODUCTION *15 minutes*

This debate is designed to help people consider the relative value of different people's knowledge. Participants may not have thought about this question before this session. Suggest that they do not take the debate too seriously. It should be fun. The purpose is to give them a chance to listen to, and reflect on, other viewpoints in order to help them explore the question together.

Show Chart 11 with the Debate motion.

Elect a Chairperson (if possible, someone with a sense of humour) and a timekeeper from among the participants. Put the remaining participants into three groups: A, B and C. Try to split up those who are more confident about sharing their ideas, and ensure that there is a balance of men and women in each group. Explain that participants will be asked to take a viewpoint that is not necessarily

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11 The Knowledge Debate: 1

'When choosing a site for a well, the knowledge of outside experts is more important than the knowledge of anyone else'.

their own. Emphasise that this is the best way to have a balanced debate. However, at the end they will each be asked to vote according to their *own* views.

Each group will argue for or against the motion. They will really be arguing about the value of their own knowledge.

■ **GROUP A** will take the viewpoint of **outside experts** – surveyors and water engineers.

■ **GROUP B** will take the viewpoint of a development **NGO** working closely with the local community (they can take on particular characters within this NGO, eg: development worker, director, office staff).

■ **GROUP C** will take the viewpoint of **the local community** (they can play different characters, eg: elders, pastor, youth, women responsible for water collection).

GROUP PREPARATION *30 minutes*

Give the groups about 30 minutes to prepare. Explain the process and the timings, using Chart 12 (page 18).

Each group should choose a first and second speaker; ideally, one female, the other male. They will each have a maximum of two minutes to present their case. When all six speakers have presented, the Chairperson will invite contributions from other participants (a maximum of one minute for any one participant). The first speaker for each group will then have two minutes to sum up their case.

Encourage the use of role-play – taking on certain characters and using props. The local community may want to speak in the local language.

12 The Knowledge Debate: 2

Speaker	Debate	Group	Time
First speaker	FOR	A	2 mins
First speaker	AGAINST	B	2 mins
First speaker	AGAINST	C	2 mins
Second speaker	FOR	A	2 mins
Second speaker	AGAINST	B	2 mins
Second speaker	AGAINST	C	2 mins
Contributions from other participants (open discussion)			15–30 mins
Summing up	AGAINST	C	2 mins
Summing up	AGAINST	B	2 mins
Summing up	FOR	A	2 mins
Vote			2 mins

DEBATE *1 hour*

Encourage lively, even heated, debate. If necessary, the training facilitators should be ready to start the open discussion with some controversial statements.

Finally, ask participants to stop playing their role and ask them to vote. In other words, whether they have been arguing for or against the motion, they should now vote whichever way they personally feel.

If the motion is defeated, the chairperson may wish to hold a further vote and let people vote between the NGO and community. Hopefully, the outcome of the vote will raise the relative value of different people's knowledge.

Bring the session to a close by asking participants to share key observations. Present the summary shown on Chart 13, acknowledging ideas which have already been shared and giving more time to new points which have not been raised.

13 Sharing knowledge

- We can often think that outside experts with technical knowledge know best. However, everyone's knowledge is valid and important for understanding a situation.
- Each person has a right to contribute to a discussion that relates to their own development. The outcome is improved if everyone participates.
- Language can prove a real barrier to influencing decision-making. Where discussions are not held in the language spoken by the local community this can mean that they are unable to participate fully in the decision-making process.
- Debate may prove a useful learning tool in other situations as it encourages people to see a situation from a different perspective.

Conclude by saying that the next training session will look further at the value of participation and different ways to encourage it.

Remind participants to write out learning and action points on their coloured evaluation cards – on one piece of card, one thing they will stop doing as a result of what they have learnt; on another, one thing they will do in the medium term, and on another, one thing they will apply immediately. They should try to do this at the end of every session.

SESSION 5

Facilitation skills

Aim

To establish the key differences between teaching and facilitating, to learn about the skills and characteristics of a good facilitator, and to practise facilitating discussions using PILLARS Guides.

Objectives

■ To highlight the difference between teaching and facilitating.

■ To discuss the role of a facilitator and identify qualities and skills of a good facilitator.

■ To gain skills in facilitating discussions in small groups using PILLARS Guides.

Materials

■ The PILLARS Guides *Building the capacity of local groups* and *Mobilising the community*

Pre-prepared flipcharts:
14 Differences between school teaching and facilitation *(page 20)*
15 Characteristics of a good facilitator *(page 21)*
16 Skills of a good facilitator *(page 21)*

Handout 3 *(see Appendix C, page 64)*
Differences between school teaching and facilitation
Characteristics of a good facilitator
Skills of a good facilitator

PROGRAMME

Activity 1 *25 minutes*
ROLE-PLAY

Role-play can be a very effective way of introducing new ideas and illustrating key learning points in an engaging and enjoyable way.

Before the session, you will need to set up two role-plays showing two groups working through a double page of a PILLARS Guide together. This could be either *Mobilising the Community,* Waiting for change (A1), or *Building the capacity of local groups,* Understanding the purpose of a group (C1) or Group members (C11).

• Choose one person to lead each of these discussions – either one of the training facilitators or a participant who is confident in leading others.

• Ask one of them to present the chosen double page in the way a traditional teacher would present it to a class. They should not allow any participation, but should simply ask the group to respond to the discussion questions and then tell them whether their answers were right or wrong.

• Ask the other group leader to facilitate a participatory discussion of the same double page, in which each group member shares their ideas and is encouraged to listen to, and learn from, others.

• Ask five participants to join each leader and briefly prepare their role-play.

• During the session, ask them to act out the role-play in front of the rest of the participants. Ask those watching to reflect on the difference between the two role-plays. Reflect on the style of the person leading the discussion and the level of participation by the group members. Which role-play illustrates the type of interaction that we would hope to see when groups use the PILLARS Guides?

Activity 2 *20 minutes*
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SCHOOL TEACHING AND FACILITATION

• Ask participants to think back to their experience of being at school. What methods were used to teach new ideas? Ask participants to brainstorm in pairs for about ten minutes on the following question: 'What is the difference between school teaching and facilitation?' Ask them to note down their ideas.

• Divide a piece of flip chart paper into two columns headed 'School teaching' and 'Facilitation'. Then bring the group back together and ask each pair to write up two ideas under each column. Using Chart 14 (page 20), add any points that have not already been raised. This Chart can also be shared as Handout 3 (page 64).

A school teacher may use some facilitation techniques to encourage students to be active in the learning process. However, information is often presented from the front, as children may not have much personal experience to share on a particular topic, or may need to be given answers in order to complete a syllabus or to pass an exam. By contrast, adult learners bring a wealth of

14 Differences between school teaching and facilitation

SCHOOL TEACHING	FACILITATION
Teacher starts from their own knowledge	Facilitator starts from the knowledge of the group
Teacher follows a pre-set curriculum	Facilitator addresses issues identified by the group or their community and adapts new ideas to the needs and culture of the group
Teacher presents new information from the front	Facilitator uses practical, participatory methods, eg: group discussion and activities in which all members of the group participate
Information flows in just one direction, from teacher to students	Information flows in many different directions between the facilitator and individual group members – a genuine exchange of ideas
Teacher brings extensive knowledge of the subject	Facilitator draws out and builds on the knowledge of the group, and knows where to find further information on the subject
Teacher is concerned with students understanding the right answer	Facilitator encourages and values different views
Teacher works for the community and may come from outside the community	Facilitator works with the community and may come from within the community
Teacher has a formal relationship with the students, based on their status as a teacher	Facilitator is considered as an equal, and has relationships based on trust, respect and a desire to serve

experience and knowledge to any learning process. This needs to be recognised, drawn out and built on. Facilitation skills are essential in this process.

THE PURPOSE OF FACILITATION *10 minutes*

The Brazilian educator, Paolo Freire, believed that education should be liberating. Rather than giving learners answers, education should aim to increase the learner's awareness so that they are able to identify problems and their causes, and find solutions to them. A facilitator's role is to help a group through this process by asking questions that encourage new ways of thinking about and analysing their situation. The facilitator does not know all the answers. Their role is to help the group think critically about their own needs and interests, and to make decisions for themselves. There should be a balance between offering ideas to guide the group and patiently listening and questioning.

The facilitator's role is also to encourage each member of the group to contribute to the best of their ability. Everyone has valuable knowledge and a valuable contribution to make. But people can be reluctant to share their knowledge. They may lack the confidence or may not consider what they know to be important. Sometimes people do not want to share their knowledge because it gives them a certain amount of power and advantage over others. However, when we do share our knowledge, everyone benefits. The person sharing it does not lose it after giving it away, and the person receiving it has received something new which they in turn can pass on to others. The facilitator's role is to build trust and respect between the members of the group and to encourage dialogue and learning, from which the whole group will benefit.

Activity 3 *20 minutes*
WHAT MAKES A GOOD FACILITATOR?

A good facilitator has certain personal characteristics and skills that encourage group members to participate in a discussion or activity.

• Divide participants into groups of four or five. Give each group a piece of flipchart paper, and ask them to draw the characteristics of a good facilitator. For example, they might draw an ear to symbolise a good listener. Ask each group to stick their drawings on the wall so that all participants can look at them and compare their ideas.

Present Chart 15 as a summary of these characteristics, checking participants' understanding and asking for comments. This list is also included in Handout 3 (page 64).

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15 Characteristics of a good facilitator

A good facilitator should be:

- humble
- generous
- patient
- understanding
- accepting
- inclusive
- an encourager
- an enabler
- affirming of everyone's knowledge
- sensitive to the needs of others
- willing to learn from mistakes
- dynamic, a motivator
- a good listener
- good at summarising others' ideas
- confident
- a good communicator.

Emphasise that facilitation is about getting a balance between these different characteristics – for example, between being a good listener and a good communicator, between being patient and dynamic. Although certain skills and techniques can be learnt and applied, the most important thing

is the facilitator's ability to relate to individual group members in a way that makes them feel valued and encouraged. This will affect the way the whole group works together and what it will achieve.

Present Chart 16 and refer to it in Handout 3 following a short discussion of the skills listed.

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16 Skills of a good facilitator

A good facilitator should:

- be well prepared whilst remaining flexible
- think and act creatively
- deal with sensitive issues and manage people's feelings
- encourage humour and respect
- negotiate with and influence others
- keep to time without being driven by it.

'Facilitation is the art, not of putting ideas into people's heads, but of drawing ideas out.' ANON

'A facilitator is best when people barely know that he or she exists…

A good facilitator is one who talks little. When the work is done, the aim fulfilled, they will all say, "We did this ourselves."' LAO TZU 500 BC

Explain that good facilitation is not easy. It is like conducting a music band. Though the music is written down already, it is the conductor's job to build the right atmosphere, to help each individual to be their most creative and to blend everyone together to form an exciting and productive team.

A facilitator is like a conductor. Great music emerges when everyone is communicating together. Good communication, just like good music, is more about listening than talking. If everyone plays all the time, there is nothing but an unpleasant noise. It is the conductor's job to help each player to listen to others, to keep quiet until it is the right time for them to play.

A good facilitator is interested not only in whether an objective is achieved but how. The process is just as important as the product. The process of building local knowledge and skills is vital if the group is to gain the confidence and ability to initiate and sustain positive change.

Ask participants to think of situations where people were not consulted about an issue that directly affected them. This could be a development project where the organisation involved did not consult the community about what changes it wanted to make. As a result, the project did not lead to lasting change because the community did not want to remain involved. What difference does it make if people's ideas and experience are taken into account in future planning and activities? Emphasise that even if this process takes time, it leads to better relationships and more sustainable change. A well-facilitated discussion process is essential.

Activity 4 *30 minutes*
FACILITATION PRACTICE

This activity needs to be prepared in advance.

Divide participants into working groups of five or six. Each group will need a facilitator – someone who has already demonstrated a certain level of confidence in leading others in discussion, who can model good facilitation to their group. These facilitators should be approached before the start of the session. This will give them time to look through a selected double page and familiarise themselves with the content. Allocate one of the following pages to each facilitator: *Mobilising the community,* A secret in a box (A10), or *Building the capacity of local groups,* Working together (C2).

• During the session, ask each working group to imagine that they are members of a local community group. Ask each working group to work through a double page together. Tell them not to worry if they find it difficult! There will be plenty of opportunity to practise facilitating discussions throughout the week and to become familiar with the content and layout of the Guides.

• After 20 minutes, bring the groups back together. Ask one or two people to share what they learnt during the discussions. Did everyone participate? Was it difficult to facilitate?

Explain that in the next session, the participants will look at techniques for dealing with particular difficulties faced when facilitating group discussion.

Practising facilitation skills, India.

Photo: Isabel Carter, Tearfund