

## SESSION 11

# Using PILLARS Guides to strengthen literacy skills

### Aim

To increase participants' understanding of why and how the PILLARS Guides can be used to strengthen literacy skills.

### Objectives

- To reflect on how the content, design and language of the Guides helps strengthen the literacy skills of users.
- To practise using Guides to strengthen the literacy skills of users.

### Materials

- Copies of *Building the capacity of local groups*, *Mobilising the community*, *Mobilising the Church*



Pre-prepared flipcharts:

- 31 Using PILLARS Guides to strengthen literacy skills (page 35)
- 32 How can PILLARS Guides strengthen literacy skills? (page 36)



Handout 7 (see Appendix C, page 68)  
Strengthening literacy skills: ways of working through a double page

## PROGRAMME

### INTRODUCTION 10 minutes

The research that led to PILLARS showed that groups in which many members were not literate were still interested in having access to printed information. As long as one or two members of a group are literate, they are able to share the information with the rest of the group. Not every member of the group has to be literate to benefit from the new ideas. As such, PILLARS Guides are designed to strengthen group literacy.

The Guides can also be used to strengthen the literacy skills of individual group members. Literacy programmes are more successful where there are reading materials linked to local issues that readers can identify with and are concerned about. This encourages those who are newly literate to continue to use their reading and writing skills. It can bring positive economic and social change by providing access to relevant information. PILLARS Guides can provide useful follow-up material to a basic literacy class, since they address topics that are relevant and useful for people's daily lives.

### Activity 1 50 minutes

#### ANALYSING PILLARS GUIDES

- In working groups of four to five, give participants 20 minutes to discuss the questions on Chart 31.

## 31 Using PILLARS Guides to strengthen literacy skills

- 1 List three reasons why PILLARS Guides may be useful in strengthening literacy skills.
- 2 How can facilitators work through a double page of a PILLARS Guide in a way that will strengthen the literacy skills of individual group members?
- 3 How could the PILLARS Guides be adapted so that they are more useful in strengthening the literacy skills of the group members?

- Ask each group to feedback their ideas. Then present Chart 32 (page 36).

Chart 33 (page 36), can be given as Handout 7. Explain that this simple way of working through a double page can be useful when using the Guides with *any* purpose in mind – not only for strengthening literacy skills. Read Handout 7 together, and ask for questions or comments.

## 32 How can PILLARS Guides strengthen literacy skills?



### THE DESIGN

- **Illustrations** Can be used on their own, help readers understand the text
- **Titles** Large print, summarise the message of the text
- **Text** Short paragraphs or bullet points make it easier to understand
- **Discussion questions** Help readers apply the ideas to their context

### THE LANGUAGE AND STYLE

- **Vocabulary** Simple, accessible
- **Sentences** Short

### THE TOPICS

- Relevant topics motivate people to read the Guides, and to talk and write about their own experience

## 33 Strengthening literacy skills: ways of working through a double page



- Look at the pictures together. Ask people:
  - What is happening in the pictures?
  - What ideas come to mind when you look at them?

AIM - to draw out the main ideas that are presented in the text, and to draw out some key vocabulary.
- Pre-view key vocabulary in the text. Write the most important words on a flipchart or board or produce flash cards of the main key words. Ask individuals to read the words out loud. Put each word in a different sentence.
  - What does each word mean?

AIM - to prepare readers for reading the text.
- Read the text together. Take it in turns to read one line each out loud.
 

AIM - to provide reading practice.
- Ask people to read the text again, this time on their own. Ask stronger readers to help weaker students where necessary.
 

AIM - to provide further reading practice.
- Ask questions about the text.
  - What does it talk about?
  - What is the main message of the text?
- What can we learn from the text?
 

AIM - to check readers' understanding of the text.
- Talk through the discussion questions together, or in small groups.
 

AIM - to give readers the opportunity to explore and comment on ideas presented in the text, and to apply the information to their own lives and experience.
- Ask people to copy down the key words on the flipchart/board.
 

AIM - to provide writing practice.
- Ask people to write a short answer to each discussion question.
 

AIM - to provide further writing practice, and to capture individuals' knowledge, experience and thoughts.
- Review each lesson each week, or each time of meeting.
 

AIM - to build on what people have learnt and to give them a sense of progress.

Explain that the Guides can be adapted in the following ways to make them more effective in strengthening the literacy skills of the users:

- the double page can be enlarged – larger print, larger visuals – to aid understanding
- when trying to stimulate literacy in a second language, bi-lingual Guides can be printed. Users can check their understanding of the text in the second language against their understanding of it in their first language.
- The PILLARS production process, by which literature is translated and written locally in the mother tongue, is also a way of encouraging people to read and write in their mother tongue, and to develop their literacy skills.

- Ask the groups to reflect on what they have learnt. Do they know of any literacy groups that might be interested in using the PILLARS Guides as reading material? Do they know of any literacy workers who might be interested in finding out about the Guides or receiving training in using them in their work?

Conclude the session by asking participants to fill out their coloured learning and action cards and to share one really positive thing they have enjoyed about the session.

## Activity 2 45 minutes

### STRENGTHENING LITERACY SKILLS

- Divide the participants into small groups. Ask them to choose one person to lead the rest of the group through one of the following double pages, in ways that will strengthen the literacy skills of the users, referring to Handout 7:
  - *Building the capacity of local groups, Unity is strength (C3)*
  - *Mobilising the community, Waiting for change, (A1), Can our community make changes? (A2)*
  - *Mobilising the Church, What is the church? (B1)*



## SESSION 12

# Using role-play to share information

### Aim

Participants learn how role-plays can be used to share information and gain practical tips in using them.

### Objectives

- To consider the advantages of using role-play to share information.
- To consider what makes a good role-play.
- To gain confidence in planning and using role-play to share information.

### Materials

- Copies of *Mobilising the community*



Pre-prepared flipcharts:

34 Why role-play? (page 38)

35 Aspects of a good role-play (page 39)

## PROGRAMME

### Introduction 35 minutes

Ask the participants to think of times when role-play has been used during the training. This list should include the role-play illustrating the difference between teaching and facilitating, and the role-play illustrating the difficulties faced by a facilitator, during which the audience was allowed to participate second time round. Why was it used? What were the learning objectives?

Put participants in pairs and ask them to brainstorm ideas about why role-play is useful. Ask them to feed back their ideas, adding those on Chart 34 where they have not already been mentioned.

Ask participants to brainstorm what makes a good role-play. Add ideas from the list in Chart 35 where they have not already been mentioned.

## 34 Why role-play?

- A non-threatening way of exploring sensitive issues
- Allows people to practise alternative ways of thinking and behaving
- Reinforces ideas in a way that is memorable and non-threatening
- A widely accepted form of communication in many cultures and societies
- Entertaining and enjoyable for those acting and those watching
- Engages the audience on an emotional as well as an intellectual level
- The audience does not need a high level of literacy
- Humour can break down barriers

## 35 Aspects of a good role-play

- Short and to the point
- Confident participants
- Participants speak clearly
- Uses the local language
- Relevant to local culture
- Relevant to the audience – rural / urban, using local names and place names
- Can be funny
- Sensitive to the political situation

Role-plays do not need many people to be effective. A role-play involving two people can be just as effective as role-play using a larger number of people. People can ask questions afterwards to bring out the key points from the audience.

Below are two activities to illustrate how role-play can be used.

### Activity 1 15 minutes

#### THE TRUST GAME

- Put participants in pairs. Ask one person in each pair to lead their partner around the room by holding their hand in front of their partner's face. The person being led must keep their eyes open and follow their

partner's hand. The person leading is allowed to take their partner all over the room and to put them in awkward positions. The participants then swap roles, so that each person has an opportunity both to lead and to follow.

Ask the participants how they felt leading and how they felt being led. What do they think this activity illustrates?

The purpose of the activity is to explore power relationships and the issue of trust. A facilitator is like the leader in this exercise – and a leader has power over the person being led, and may well experience themselves as being in a powerful situation. Those being facilitated are like the person being led – they have put their trust in the facilitator and as such are quite vulnerable and dependent on the facilitator not abusing their position of power but using it to lead the group in a positive direction.

## Activity 2 20 minutes

### IMAGE THEATRE

- Divide participants into small groups and ask each group to select a leader. Ask each group leader to arrange the rest of their group into a physical image that represents a particular word given to them. Such words might include 'participation', 'development', 'change', or any other word that the participants may want to explore together.
- Tell the group leaders that they are allowed to put the members of their group into any position that they think helps people to understand that word. The groups should stay silent as the image is formed. All the groups should be asked to model the same word.
- The participants can then compare the different images and different interpretations of this word, to show the different ways it can be understood and communicated to others.

Ask participants to reflect on what they have learnt through this activity, and how they could use it in their own work.

## Role-play practice 35 minutes

Divide participants into groups of five or six. Ask them to choose one person to facilitate *Mobilising the community*, *Crossing the river* (A8). Alternatively, divide participants by area of origin

or by organisation. Ask them to choose one person to facilitate a group discussion of *Mobilising the Community*, Using role-plays and song (A14). This encourages the participants to reflect on the different ways in which they could use role-play with local community groups, or in their work.



Photo: Isabel Carter, Tearfund

Acting out a role-play based on a *PILLARS Guide*, Nigeria.

## SESSION 13

# Further practice in using PILLARS Guides

### Aim

To increase participants' understanding of the content of the PILLARS Guides and to provide further practice in using Guides to facilitate small group discussion.

### Objectives

- To become more familiar with the content of the PILLARS Guides.
- To reflect on the theme of group meetings.
- To become more confident in using the Guides to encourage discussion and action.
- To practise facilitation skills and participatory learning and action tools.

### Materials:

- From *Building the capacity of local groups*, copies of pages:  
Group members (C11)  
Making the most of meetings (C12)  
Setting aims and objectives (C13)

## PROGRAMME

This session will provide participants with further experience of working through a double page of a Guide in a small group setting. The pages focus on the theme of meetings. It is hoped that this will encourage further reflection on the value of working together and ways in which this can be made even more effective. It will provide further experience in facilitating group discussions.

### Activity 1 hour 45 minutes

Divide the participants into working groups of four to five. Ask each group to select one member to facilitate a discussion using one of the double pages listed above. This must be someone who has not had the opportunity to facilitate discussions in previous training sessions. Give each group 45 minutes for discussion. Then ask each group to

select another member to facilitate another given double page. Again, this should be someone who has not yet had the opportunity to facilitate. Bring all the groups back together after an additional 45 minutes. What did they learn about the characteristics of a good group leader? How would facilitators change the way they facilitated so that more people participate in the discussion? How confident do the participants now feel in using the PILLARS Guides?

Stress that the role of the facilitator is to help the group explore a topic and to agree on how they want to use the information and ideas they have discussed. This means that they do not need to stick to the questions given but should add or omit questions where necessary. They should rephrase people's comments when necessary and encourage further analysis so that the group understands how the information applies to their context.

Explain that using proverbs or traditional stories can be an effective way of illustrating the relevance of a particular topic. Culturally relevant forms of communication, such as song or story-telling, are a good way of reinforcing understanding and helping people to engage. This is particularly the case where people have little access to printed information in their mother tongue, and may not be used to learning new ideas through reading.

Remind participants of the value of using role-play and energisers. Explain that they will have an opportunity to practise using the Guides with local community groups and to try out these different ways of sharing information.

## SESSION 14

# Introduction to field study visit

### Aim

To introduce participants to the purpose of the field study visits and begin the practical preparations.

### Objectives

- To introduce participants to the purpose of the field study visit.
- To inform participants about the groups to be visited, to help them target their discussions and materials.
- To run through the proposed activities for the field study visits.
- To begin preparing materials for discussion.

### Materials

- All available PILLARS Guides
- Flipchart paper, marker pens



Pre-prepared flipcharts:

- 36 Purpose of field study visit (page 41)
- 37 Field study visit (page 42)
- 38 The PILLARS Guides (page 42)

## PROGRAMME

### Introduction 1 hour

Explain that the purpose of the field visit is for participants to have an opportunity to put some of what they have learnt during the training into practice. Present Chart 36.

### 36 Purpose of field study visit

- To practise using PILLARS Guides with local community groups
- To reflect on the relevance of the content of the Guides and of the discussion process
- To gain confidence in adapting PILLARS materials to the needs and interests of a particular group

The participants will spend approximately two hours with a local community group. They will spend time getting to know, and finding out about, the group, before facilitating discussions based on a double page of a PILLARS Guide. Participants can choose a different double page according to the information they are given about the needs and priorities of the groups to be visited. At the end of the visit, the participants will ask the community groups to look through and comment on several PILLARS Guides, in order to find out whether they are tools that might be useful in their group activities.



*Gathering information about the community.*

Tell the participants about the membership, aims, activities and interests of the community groups they will visit. Encourage them to take notes on this as it will be information they will want to refer to when planning their activities.

Present Chart 37, explaining that the field visit will incorporate four distinct elements.

**37 Field study visit** 

- Introductions *20 minutes*
- Gaining information about the group and their interests *20 minutes*
- Small group discussion *40 minutes*
- Feedback on the PILLARS Guides *20 minutes*

Explain these different elements in more detail:

**INTRODUCTIONS**

Encourage the participants to consider how they will introduce themselves to the community groups they visit. How will they find out about the group’s activities, aims and membership? Can they think of ideas to bring some humour, fun, energisers or song into the time they spend with the group, so that it will be an enjoyable experience for them? Though the communities will have been briefed about the visits, they may also have other expectations and it is worth discussing how to handle these (eg: funding, resources, ongoing contact).

**GAINING INFORMATION ABOUT THE GROUP AND THEIR INTERESTS**

This is an excellent opportunity to gain more understanding of the group and of their access to, and use of, various sources of information, especially printed information.

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

This will be the key part of the field visit. It will involve some participants leading a discussion with a small group based on a selected double page of a PILLARS Guide, with the additional support of posters and activities such as role-play. Suggest that the participants link these as much as possible to

the group’s situation and interests. Encourage discussion and questions by all members.

**FEEDBACK ON THE DISCUSSION PROCESS AND PILLARS GUIDES**

Participants should then ask group members what they thought of the discussion. What did they think of the style and approach of the people facilitating? How did it differ from traditional school teaching? Had they ever participated in this type of discussion before? Did they feel comfortable about sharing their ideas? What did they learn?

The participants should then briefly share with them the aims of this type of group discussion (see SESSION 2, Aims of PILLARS Guides).

The participants should give the group time to look through a translated PILLARS Guide, or section of a Guide, and to read through and discuss a translated double page. They can ask the group to comment on the Guides, using Chart 38, and leave copies of *Footsteps* or PILLARS with the group by way of thanks. Find out if they would be interested in using PILLARS Guides in the future, and take their address and contact details if they wish to be sent copies.

**38 The PILLARS Guides** 

- What do the groups think of the content of the Guides / topics?
- Do they find the text easy to understand, and is it relevant to their context?
- What do they think of the format and design of the Guides?
- How much would they be prepared to pay for a Guide?

Inform the participants that they will need to prepare a short presentation highlighting the key learning points following the visit. There will be an opportunity for them to share their learning points later.

**Activity** 45 minutes**PREPARING FOR THE FIELD STUDY VISIT**

- Put participants into small working groups of five or six. The working group should have a balance of men and women of different ages and backgrounds. However, if one of the groups visited is, for example, a women's group, it may be more appropriate for an all-female group of participants to work with them.
- Where different community groups are being visited, match one group of participants with each community group, according to areas of experience or interest, and gender or age, if relevant. Where just one large community group is being visited, discuss how the group can be divided on arrival. Are there participants who would rather work with young people or with women if they are present?

- Ask participants to select one double page from a PILLARS Guide that is available in the language of use, according to what they know of the needs or interests of the groups they will be working with. Where this information is not available, encourage them to choose a more general topic that would be relevant to any group that meets and works together. Ask participants to begin to think about how they will present this double page to the group.



## SESSION 15

# Adapting PILLARS materials for a field study visit

### Aim

To prepare materials and activities for the field study visit.

### Objectives

- To prepare to use a double page of a PILLARS Guide with a local community group.
- To practise adapting the illustrations and information from PILLARS Guides for a specific target audience.
- To practise role-play, making posters, and other participatory learning and action tools that can be used to communicate and explore ideas.

### Materials

- Flipchart paper, marker pens



Pre-prepared flipchart:  
39 Learning objectives (page 45)

This session will provide an opportunity to prepare materials for small group discussions, to plan how information will be presented and discussion facilitated.

## PROGRAMME

### SETTING OBJECTIVES FOR THE GROUP DISCUSSION 20 minutes

The participants need to be very clear about the objectives of the discussion they are going to lead as part of the field study visit. They should practise writing these. The discussion needs to be **learner-centred** rather than **facilitator-centred**.

Objectives need to start with a phrase like 'By the end of this discussion, the learner will know about or be able to...'. A good objective answers the questions:



Photo: Isabel Carter, Tearfund

*Adapting a role-play for a field study visit, Brazil.*

- **What** will the group know or be able to do by the end of the session?
- **How** will they learn this? What methods will you use?
- **What** degree of understanding will the group have?

Many objectives are too vague. At the end of the discussion it can be difficult to tell whether the objective has been achieved or not. A good objective is **clear** and **measurable**. All discussions must be completed in a limited time, so it is important that objectives are **realistic**, both in terms of what the group can achieve, and in terms of the time available.

### Activity 20 minutes

#### SETTING OBJECTIVES FOR FIELD STUDY DISCUSSION

Divide participants into the groups they will work in during the field study visit. Ask each working group to discuss Chart 39 (page 45). Then ask them to set objectives for the discussion they will lead. Ask each working group to share these with the other participants. Invite comments.

## 39 Learning objectives

Are the following objectives good or bad? Why? Do they satisfy the points made above?

- To teach the group about planning.
- To build a local classroom.
- The group will be able to make a nutritious meal for a baby using local vegetables.
- To show the group how to make jam.
- The group will be able to list five roles of a treasurer.
- The group will be able to prepare a seasonal calendar in just 45 minutes, which shows how household income varies during the year.

### PREPARE YOUR MATERIALS *40 minutes*

Posters are a valuable way of sharing information with many people, especially people who are unable to read. The participants could either copy the existing illustration from the double page of the Guide that they are planning to discuss, or they could design their own poster, combining ideas from the original illustration and the text.

The layout and design of information in posters has a huge influence on how likely people are to read and understand the meaning. There are three things to consider when designing posters: text, illustrations and layout.

#### TEXT

The most effective posters often use very few words, and sometimes, none at all. Titles or headings need to be short and, if possible, easy to remember. Consider the importance of making the poster useful for people who are semi-literate. Capital letters can be harder to read. Handwriting should be clear and easy to read.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS

Discuss the relative advantages and disadvantages of using photos and illustrations. Mention that photos must be of high quality to be useful. Photos always define a certain cultural group or location and do not photocopy well. Good clear line illustrations reproduce well and have wider cultural application. Cartoons may be very useful if there is someone with such skills available.

Introduce the idea that, as well as literacy, people need to be visually literate. If people have little exposure to illustrations or photos it is really important to:

- use images of the whole body, rather than cut off hands, head or legs
- avoid using symbols that people may not understand, such as arrows to show a cycle, dotted lines for rain, ticks or crosses, etc.
- keep images to the same scale
- be aware that the idea of perspective may not exist.

#### LAYOUT

Good poster design makes use of large headings, space or labels. Posters should be as simple and clear in their design as possible. Good use of colour can help catch people's attention. The information should look interesting.

Present examples of both good and bad poster design. Either use real examples or do simple, quick sketches to show that good posters ideally have one illustration (occasionally up to four smaller illustrations) and a minimum amount of text to get over one clear message.

Ask participants to work in their field visit groups to design a poster that will help reinforce the learning of the topic selected. The posters will be left with the community as a reminder of the learning.

### Using role-play *25 minutes*

Ask participants to consider how they might use role-play during the field visit. Answers could include:

- to introduce the need for the information they will be sharing by highlighting the issues this information will address.
- to compare two imaginary situations, one before and one after introducing the new information.

Ask participants to work in their field visit groups and design a role-play that will help present the ideas they intend to discuss. They will have more time in the planning session to practise this, if needed.