

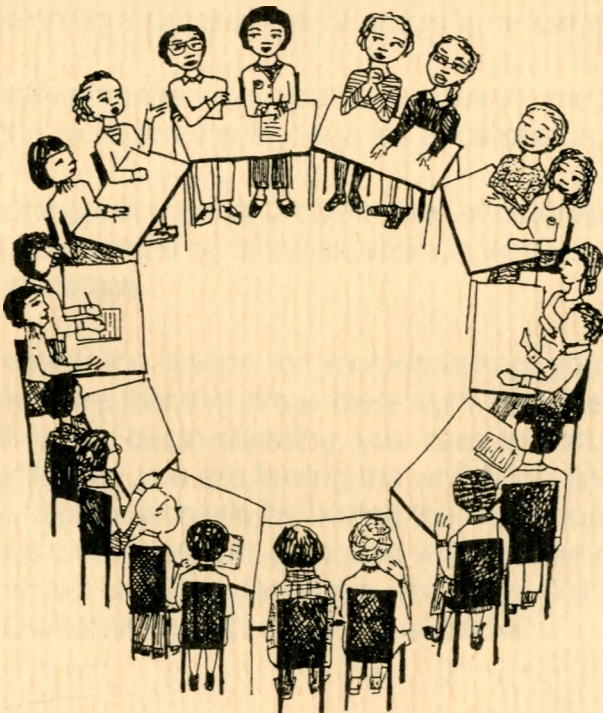
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HUMAN AWARENESS PROGRAMME



ACTION NOTES

NO 3: WORKSHOPS



WORKSHOPS

This pamphlet will help you to plan a workshop. It looks at planning the content as well as the practical arrangements for the workshop.

There are many reasons for having a workshop. They could include:

- * teaching your activists a skill, like running meetings or producing media;
- * analysing a new political development e.g. an election or a new law;
- * planning a programme of action or a campaign;
- * evaluating the work you have done in the past year, or the work you have done for a campaign;
- * sorting out internal problem like structures that are not appropriate or a break down in working relationships.

Whatever the reason for your workshop, you need to make sure that the aim is clear right from the start. Before you begin planning, you need to sort out exactly why you are having the workshop and what you hope to achieve by having the workshop. If your aim is clear, you can go ahead with the planning. This pamphlet is about planning a workshop **ONCE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE.**

1 THE PLANNING TEAM

Planning is much easier to do if you work in a team. When your organisation decides to have a workshop, you need to assign a group of people to the planning team.

The two main tasks of the planning team are:

- * to plan the content of the workshop and
- * to plan the practical details of the workshop.

The size of the planning team will depend on the size of your organisation, how many people will attend the workshop and how many people want to help plan the workshop. The best size for a planning team is between three and six members.

The planning team may want to choose one person to be the overall coordinator for the workshop. This person should take responsibility for checking that tasks are done, and for liaising with the rest of the organisation.

Any outside people who are invited to give a talk or run a session must be part of your planning team. If they cannot attend all the meetings, they must attend at least one meeting. This is very important: they need to discuss the aim of the whole workshop and to know, in detail, what the rest of the workshop is about and how it will be run. Otherwise, their session could be very inappropriate.

As well as meeting to plan before the workshop, the team will need to meet during the workshop to evaluate as you go along and to change the programme if it is necessary.

The first part of this pamphlet will help your team to plan the content of the workshop.

The planning team is also responsible for planning the practical details. The team will book the venue, arrange the transport and make sure that all the necessary equipment is available.

The practical arrangements must be done in good time. This is especially true about the venue - booking the venue is one of the first things to do otherwise it may be too late to find a suitable place to hold the workshop.

The second part of the booklet will help you to plan all the practical details



2 Planning the content of the workshop

2.1 The aim of the workshop

When you start planning, your aim will probably not be very clear. Perhaps it will be something like "activist training" or "we need to work out how to respond to the new laws".

As a planning team your first task is to make the aim as clear as possible.

You need to work out exactly what you hope to achieve with this workshop and to make sure that your aim is realistic.

2.2 Who is it for?

You need to work out who you are planning to invite. Some options include:

- * inviting people your organisation is trying to mobilise or to win over;
- * inviting all members of your organisation;
- * inviting activists;
- * inviting only the executive committee;

- * inviting people from a number of different organisations.

Who you invite will obviously depend on the aim of the workshop, but you also need to work out how many people you want at your workshop.

The number of people you want at the workshop will depend on things like:

- * the aim of your workshop and how urgent your organisation's need for training is;
- * how much detail you want to go into;
- * the time you have to train people;
- * money (i.e. the cost of training many people at once and the cost of having many workshops to train smaller groups of people).

2.3 Surveying the needs of the participants.

Once you've decided who the workshop is for, you need to find out a bit more about the people who will be coming.

Find out:

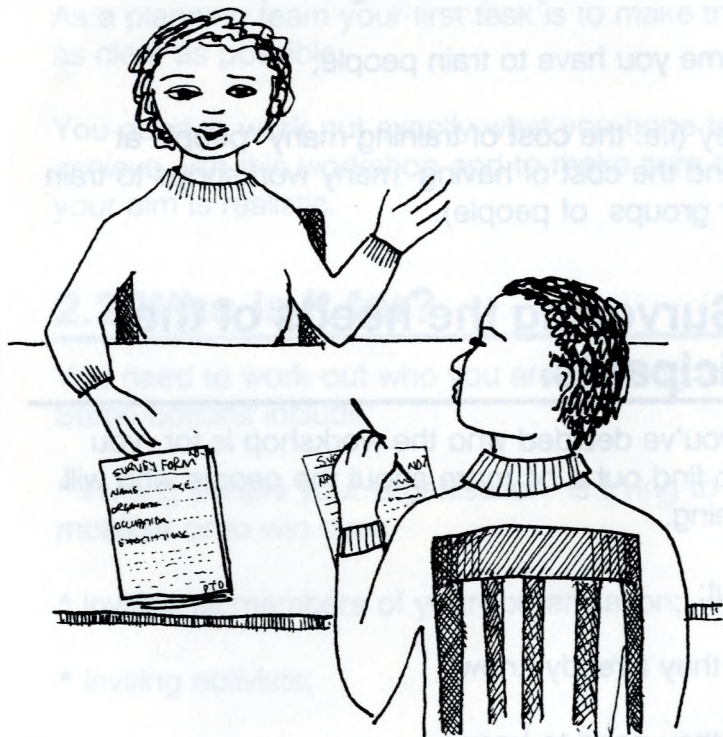
- * what they already know;
- * what they need to know;

- * what aspect of the topic they are particularly interested in;

- * what they want from the workshop.

You can find out their needs by doing a survey; you can talk to them individually or in a group, you can send them a questionnaire, or you can ask them what they want at the start of the workshop.

The more you know about the participants before the workshop, the better your planning will be.



2.4 Deciding on the content

Once you know the participants needs, and you compare them to your aims for the workshop, you will be able to work out in more detail exactly what you have to cover in the workshop.

2.5 How much time do you have?

You need to decide on the length of time for the workshop. Will it last a few hours, a day, a weekend or a week?

This depends on who is coming, how much you want to cover and the purpose of the workshop, and also on how much money and time you can afford.

Examples:

- * a workshop for new members to understand the aims of your organisation - one day;
- * a workshop to train a group of shop- stewards on the aim of unions and the role of shopstewards - a weekend;
- * a workshop to train your organisers in political analysis and to teach them organising skills - from one week full- time to a few months (full- or part-time).

2.6 The flow of the workshop

The flow of the workshop Your next step is to work out the flow of the workshop. At this stage, you don't need to worry about time allocation or how sessions will work out, you just work out the sequence in which you will cover the material.

You need to work out the most logical place to start: usually we start with people's experiences and what they already think and know about the topic.

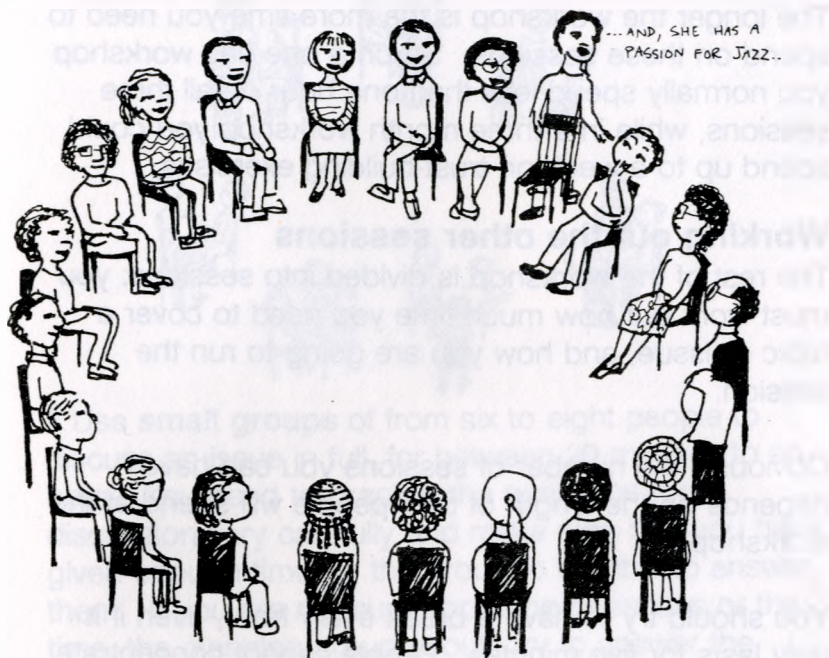
2.7 The programme

You are now ready to discuss sessions and who will run them.

Starting the workshop

There are three sessions you need to include at the start of all workshops: These sessions help to develop group cohesion, they help the individuals to feel part of a group that has common goals.

* **Icebreaker** - icebreakers are exercises or games that help people to get to know each other. The icebreaker can be very simple (e.g. introducing yourself to the group), or it can be longer and more complicated. This is important because people learn and participate better if they feel comfortable together.



* **Expectations** - in this session you ask the participants what they are expecting from the workshop. You then tell them what you will be covering and if necessary you may have to negotiate changes to the programme. If you've done your homework properly and surveyed the needs of the group thoroughly, you'll have to make fewer changes at this stage.

* **Standard setting** - a fairly brief session on setting rules or guidelines for the workshop. The standards can cover everything from punctuality, only one person talking at a time, smoking and security considerations. In a long workshop you may have to rediscuss the standards you set from time to time.

The longer the workshop is the more time you need to spend on these sessions. So on a one day workshop you normally spend less than one hour on all three sessions, while in a three month workshop you could spend up to a week on trust-building exercises.

Working out the other sessions

The rest of the workshop is divided into sessions: you must work out how much time you need to cover a topic or issue, and how you are going to run the session.

Obviously the number of sessions you can have depends on the length of time people will spend at the workshop.

You should try to have a break every hour, even if it only lasts for five minutes. People cannot concentrate for longer. This is especially important if your participants are not used to sitting in long meetings.

Ways of running sessions

There are different ways of running sessions. When you plan your sessions try to make sure that you use a wide variety of methods otherwise it can be very boring and repetitive.

* Use **buzz groups** of two or three people who talk to each other for a few minutes about an issue and then report to the big group. This can be useful especially to ask questions like "When did you first hear about this issue?" or "what is your experience of this issue?" or "what questions do you have?"



* Use **small groups** of from six to eight people to discuss an issue in full, for between 20 minutes to an hour. You need to prepare the questions for discussion very carefully and make sure that you have given enough time for the group to be able to answer them. If you are not sure about the questions or the time, the planning group should try to answer the questions to check that they are useful.



After the small group discussion you can have report backs.

Report backs can often be very boring if each group reports on everything they have discussed. To make things more interesting, ask people to write their answers on newsprint and then ask each group to report back on a different question. So, group one could report back on question one, group two on question two, etc. Other groups can add if they have something new to say, but don't let them give the whole report.

The newsprint reports can be stuck up on the wall and people can read them during a break.

* **A talk or lecture** can be useful to teach people something new or to put forward an analysis of a situation or a position on a topic that you will be discussing. After the talk you need to give time for questions of clarification when people can clear up anything they didn't understand, and then give time for discussion when people can disagree with what the speaker said or add to it.

It is often very helpful to follow a talk with small group discussions or buzz groups.



*** Plenary discussion** (discussion in the big group) can be very useful if you are talking about something very important that the whole group needs to agree on. You need a very good group leader to run the discussion. The group leader needs to make sure that everyone has a chance to talk and ask questions and that even quiet people can participate. You can combine plenary discussion with buzz groups if the group is being very quiet or one or two people are dominating.

*** Simulation games, questionnaires, role plays and practise "in the field"** are all ways of helping people to experience what they are learning in the workshop.

Evaluation

You need to end each workshop with a session during which participants can evaluate the workshop. In a long workshop you may also want to include a midway evaluation, or a quick evaluation at the end of each day.

In the evaluation you usually try to find out what people found most useful and what they found least useful. It is also helpful to ask people to make concrete suggestions for changing the programme in future workshops.

You can have verbal evaluations, or you can ask people to fill in an evaluation form. It is also useful to combine written and verbal evaluation.

Here is an example of a simple evaluation form:

1. What did you find most useful about the workshop?
2. What three things did you learn, and how do you think you will use them in the future?
3. What did you find least useful about the workshop?
4. Do you have any comments to make about the practical arrangements?
5. Do you have any suggestions for changing the programme in future workshops?

As well as having an evaluation at the end of the workshop, it is also important to do a follow up evaluation after the workshop. You could wait for between one to three months and then phone or write to the participants asking them if the workshop has made any difference in their work. In this way you can find out how useful the workshop was in the longer term.

Some things to consider

* The size of the group - in general the bigger the group, the less time you should spend in plenary. This is especially true of groups that have more than thirty participants.

* The length of the workshop - in general the longer the workshop, the more breaks you will need. If a workshop is longer than two days, you cannot work for more than about eight hours a day. This means that you must give either the after lunch session as free time, or the after supper session. If you are running a week-long workshop, you should also give one whole afternoon off in the middle of the week.

* After lunch - this session is the one where everyone usually goes to sleep. This is often because of the big meals that conference centres give at lunch time. If you can't afford the time to give a longish lunch-break then make sure that whatever you do after lunch is active. People must be involved in discussion or in role plays or a simulation game. NEVER have a talk or lecture after lunch, rather wait till after tea.



Here is an example of a one-day workshop for new members:

Session 1 : 9.00 am to 10.30 am tea

INTRODUCTIONS: (30 minutes)

In pairs: meet someone you don't know, each spend five minute talking about yourself to your partner. In plenary: go round the group and get each person to introduce their partner.

EXPECTATIONS: (30 minutes)

Brainstorm: ask everyone to call out what they expect from the workshop. Write the main ideas on newsprint. Put up the programme, explain what you will cover and negotiate any changes that are necessary.

STANDARD SETTING: (30 minutes)

Buzz groups and plenary reports: Ask people to buzz about the standards they want to set. Then brainstorm and write up the ideas on newsprint. Allow discussion on any standards that people have problems with until every one is happy with the final list.

TEA BREAK

Session 2 : 11.00 am to 12.30 pm

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION:

Question 1: Why do you want to be part of this organisation?

Question 2: what do you already know about this organisation?

PLENARY REPORTS:

Plenary discussion: what questions do people have about the organisations?

LUNCH BREAK

Session 3: 2.30 pm to 3.30 pm

VIDEO on the launch of our organisation and highlights from some campaigns.

PLENARY DISCUSSION on video.

INDIVIDUAL WORK:

Think about and write down what kind of work you think you would like to do in the organisation. What skills do you have to offer? (include typing, writing, lay-out etc.)

TEA BREAK

Session 4: 4.00 pm to 5.00 pm

TALK:

Our organisation, its aims and structures.

Plenary Discussion: Allow questions of clarification only at first, then discussion questions.

Ask people to fill in a form saying what structure they would like to work in.

Session 5: 5.00 pm to 5.30 pm

BRIEF EVALUATION

3 PLANNING THE PRACTICAL DETAILS

3.1 The venue

As far as possible, you should try not to have workshops in your own office. If people have to go somewhere else for a workshop, they are less likely to be disturbed by phonecalls and visitors. If the venue is far away, people will not be tempted to go home or into town to attend to something. In this way you can try to avoid disruptions of the workshop.

The venue should be booked as early as possible as conference centres are often booked for months in advance.

Some things to think about:

- * Does the venue have a big enough meeting room?
- * Are there plugs for overhead projectors, etc, in the meeting room?
- * Are there other rooms where small groups can meet?
- * What is the cost per person and what does it include?
- * Are meals provided?

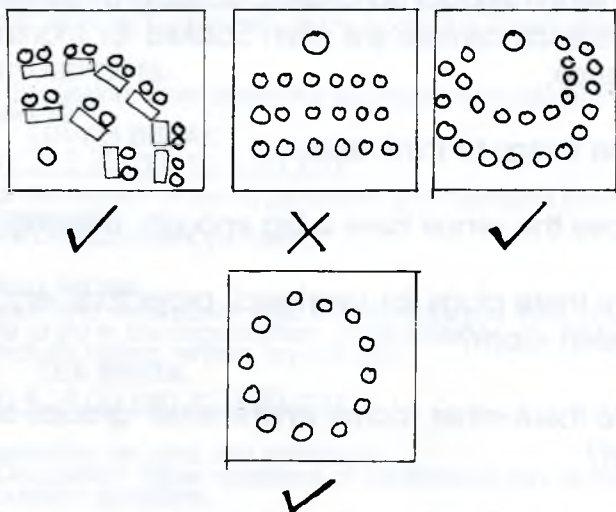
* Is there pleasant space for recreation? (especially important in long workshops.)

* Are there sleeping facilities? Do you need to bring bedding and towels or are they provided?

3.2 Room Arrangement

The chairs in the training room must be arranged so that everyone can see each other and the newsprint or charts that you intend putting on the walls

The best way to arrange the chairs is to have them in a circle or semi-circle, rather than in rows like in a class room.



3.3 Equipment

Using videos or slide-shows or overhead projectors can be very helpful in workshops. When you book

your venue you need to check what equipment is available at the venue and then make arrangements to borrow or hire equipment that you will be taking with you.

Equipment you may need includes:

- * Television and video
- * film projector, or slide projector
- * pin boards for displays
- * flip charts or newsprint
- * name labels
- * koki pens
- * masking tape or prestick
- * a soccer ball, or other team game.

If you are planning to use electrical equipment, you must set it up and check that it is working before you start the workshop. It is a waste of time to fiddle with equipment in the middle of a session.

3.4 Food and catering

Most conference centres cook for you and do not allow groups to cook for themselves.

Some will ask you to wash up after meals and you should organise a roster for this.

When you book the venue find out about the arrangement for meals.

Self-catering:

Cooking for yourself has some advantages:

- * you can choose to cook cheaper meals;
- * you can have flexible meal times; and
- * it can promote a community spirit to have people working together.

However, if your participants have to share the cooking it can take time out of your programme.

A good way to deal with self-catering is to ask another organisation to cook for you, and offer to provide concrete help for them in return.



3.5 Transport

Make sure to arrange transport for your training team and your participants.

Make it clear when you want people to arrive. It is very useful to ask the training team to arrive early especially if you will have to arrange the meeting room, allocate beds, register people and give them name tags.

3.6 Entertainment

If your workshop is going to last more than a day you should think about providing entertainment of some sort. Examples include:

- * a radio to listen to the news,;
- * music,;
- * videos, especially those of interest to your participants;
- * sport;
- * walks.

3.7 Invitations

Final invitations should go out in good time - two weeks is usually adequate for a short workshop, and up to three months for long workshops.

The invitation should give details of:

- * the dates;
- * time;
- * venue;
- * transport arrangements;
- * what to bring;
- * costs.

Here is an example of an invitation to a one day workshop:

You are invited to attend a one day workshop on media skills. The workshop will be useful to publicity secretaries and media officers of organisations.

Date: Saturday, 6 June

Time: 9.00 am to 5.00 pm

Venue: St. Luke's Church Hall

Cost: R10.00 (to cover venue and meals)

Please let us know if you are coming by phoning Jane at 123 4567 before the May 20.

It is very helpful to included a reply slip so that people can confirm that they are coming. You can also follow up your invitation with a phone call to check who is coming.

4 CONCLUSION

The key to a good workshop is to plan it in detail.

Make sure that you have checked all the practical details and that your trainers all know the programme.

If your planning is very thorough, you will be able to be flexible and change the programme if necessary.

Make sure your training team has time to meet together during the workshop, so that you can deal with problems as you go along. The team should meet once a day at least, perhaps during one of the meals or after the last session. The team co-ordinator should take responsibility for calling the team together if there are any problems.

Finally remember to set aside time for evaluation, both for the participants and for the training team.

YOUR NOTES

A CONCLUSION

The key to a good workshop is to be clear about the purpose of the workshop.

Make sure that you have checked all the practical details and that you know all the participants.

Find out a list of materials as to equipment as to what is your planning is very thorough. You will be able to do this and change the programme if necessary.

Make sure you have a good idea of what you want to achieve and what you want to do.

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