Basic Leadership Development Course
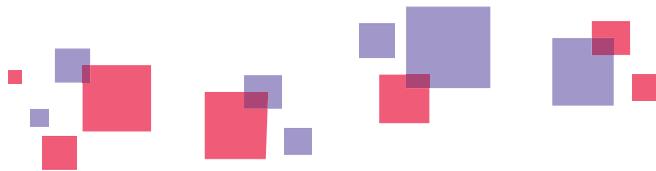
Manual for Facilitators

Popular Communication and Media Advocacy

Asia South Pacific Association
for Basic and Adult Education
Learning Beyond Boundaries

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Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education

ASPBAE

ASPBAE is a non-profit, non-government regional organisation with membership throughout the Asia Pacific region. It has operational relations with UNESCO. Its overall purpose is to strengthen the theory and practice of adult education as a contribution to individual and social development.

Today, ASPBAE covers a wide diversity of groups and individuals involved in both formal and non formal education, working with and through government agencies, universities, NGOs, community groups, trade unions, indigenous peoples, women's organisation, the media and other institutions of civil society. Their educational activities reflect global and regional imperatives in the promotion of people's empowerment and sustainable development.

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Popular Communication

'Participatory development has long drawn from music, theatre, art and poetry, the tools of popular communications, in work with communities' (Howard and Scott-Villiers, PLA Notes 39). All across the world popular communication techniques have been used with a range of community actors to help them engage with policy makers and get their views not only heard, but in some cases, taken into account, by those making decisions which affect their daily lives.

Objective

- To know the popular media tools for effective communication
- To learn how to effectively use their own creativity and inspiration in communication

Time required	Material Needed	Expected Outcomes
1.5 hours	Flip charts, markers, old magazines, flash cards	By the end of this session, participants will be able to: • Identify appropriate communication tools to share messages with community • Prepare an effective public awareness program using popular media tools

Activity A

Divide participants into small groups and present each with a problem and the context in which the problem exists. Ask each group to design a communication tool that will create awareness and educate the community about addressing the problem, within 20 minutes. Remind them that as they design the tool they should focus on the context in which the problem exists.

At the end of 20 minutes, each group makes a presentation.

After each presentation each group is asked

- What are the factors that guided the preparation of their campaign – a consolidated list is prepared

- What are the situations that make popular communication tools more effective in spreading a message

Popular communication follows a very simple structure: introduction, objectives, tools, activity, facilitation and summary. A good facilitator enables everyone to engage and share to take the discussion ahead.

Towards the end of this session, share case studies that illustrate the effective use of popular communication tools in community work. Case studies could range from the use of radio to discuss ever increasing fuel prices with various stakeholders in Burundi; puppetry, art and music used to encourage women political candidates in India; the use of video technology to bring people's views to the Prime Minister in Cambodia and Theatre of the Oppressed work with street children of Brazil.

Presentation on Popular Communication – may be shared with participants for more clarity.

Suggested Reading

1. `Get Organised'; Tan Jo Hann and Roem Topatimasang

Media Advocacy

Media Advocacy is the strategic use of any form of media to help advance an organization's objectives or goals. In this context, media is a tool, not an end in itself, but a means to an end. Through media advocacy, your organization frames the issue to show its importance to the community. Just as an artist puts a frame around his images, including what he wants you to look at and excluding the rest, advocates for any issue would present the media with problems faced by their particular population in such a way that it puts the frame around the issues and points to the desired solutions.[1]

Objective

- Understand the tools required for media advocacy
- Understand mainstream media and strategies for influencing media

Time required	Material Needed	Expected Outcomes
2 hours 15 minutes	Flip charts, markers, old magazines with pictures, glue/tape/pins	By the end of this session, participants will know: • How to prepare a media advocacy strategy

Activity A

Ask participants to think about any recent issue in their country in which the media played an effective role in making people/the Government or responsible department react to bring some positive change. Facilitate the sharing of three-four examples.

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1   http://www.aoa.gov/press/Media_Advocacy/Media_Advocacy.asp

Initiate a brainstorm, pushing participants to identify possible reasons why certain issues get extensive media coverage as compared to others. Note points on a flip chart. Use these instances to highlight the importance of being able to communicate effectively, as also to find the right channels to spread the message.

Activity B

Ask participants to identify 5 different issues for which they would like to use the media to create awareness and generate support that could eventually lead to some change at different levels – behaviour in the community or at the policy level.

Divide the group into 5 sub-groups. Give each sub-group one of the identified issues and ask them to prepare a media advocacy strategy. Tell the groups they have 30 minutes to plan their strategy, and prepare a presentation. The presentation should not exceed 7 minutes.

Explain that as each group makes its presentations, those in the audience are expected to critically analyse each strategy to see if some or all of the following criteria have been reflected -

• Audience for the campaign is clear. E.g. the media bosses; relevant political leader; social and religious leaders; policy makers; general public

• The issue to be addressed is clearly presented. E.g. basic education for young girls

• There are facts and stories to support the issue. E.g. How is the family affected if girls are deprived of basic education - illustrated by a story that shows the poor quality of life because of lack of knowledge and poor-decision making skills

• A possible solution is presented e.g. increased budget resource allocation to address the problem; better and increased access to schools for girls; alternative curriculum and teaching methods

- Suggestions offered about the ways the audience can help. E.g. public can sign a petition which is circulated; contribute towards a specific programme; write a letter of appeal to their local leader about the issue – pro-forma for which is made available

- Three options about the different ways in which the issue can be presented

At the end of each presentation, the audience is given ten minutes to give their feedback about the strategy, keeping in mind the above criteria. Remind them that the feedback should reflect what they see as effective aspects of the entire strategy; what would work/not work and why; suggestions to make it better.

Sum up this session by drawing attention to the strategic questions that advocates should answer while planning their media strategy.
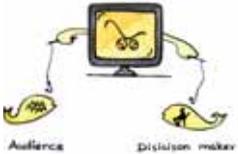
Notes to the Facilitator

Successful advocacy often rests on the ability to communicate effectively, either verbally or in writing. Policy makers and groups involved in political processes pay close attention to the press and TV.

Using media helps to reach multiple audiences, potentially attract more supporters to the cause and possibly increase profile and therefore credibility with policy makers.

At the same time, media visibility carries with it certain risks, namely that the coverage may be inaccurate or unfavourable, motivating opponents. Planning ahead will ensure that media coverage will advance the advocacy goal.

In every country the media is differently organized. Some media are controlled by government; some have wide outlets; some places it is more effective to work with TV or Radio rather than newspaper. Once the decision is made to use media then the following questions should be answered to develop an effective media strategy[2] –

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2   *Advocacy Tools and Guidelines – Promoting Policy Change, A resource manual for CARE Program Managers 2001*

Strategic Considerations	Key Questions
How to ensure you reach your target audience	• Does the media organization chosen reach the target audience?
	• Is the story or issue something that will appeal to both the target audience as well as the decision makers in the media source?
How to find the right media contacts	• Do you know someone who has covered your organization or the issue before?
	• Can you identify a media person with knowledge and a positive attitude towards the issue?
	• Have you followed local outlets to see who is covering the issue and others like it?
Is the timing right for media coverage	• Does the story relate to other current or newsworthy issues?
	• Does the story or issue offer something new?
Who within the organization/coalition should speak to the media	• Anyone with experience in media relations?
	• Spokesperson/s is/are qualified and authorised to speak for the organization/coalition?
	• Person is readily available to media when needed?
How to avoid negative or inaccurate coverage	• Is the media outlet fair and accurate?
	• Does the spokesperson have the facts right?
	• Prepared with information/facts to counter opponents?
	• Will others support/ back the spokesperson?

Getting your message across!!

Translate individual problems into social issues. Translating a problem into an issue helps others see why it is important and newsworthy. Make sure the reporter understands that the problem is not isolated to one or two people, but is a broad social issue. At the same time provide an individual story, a real person who illustrates the problem.

Present a solution. Never present a problem without a solution. If you do not present a solution, people may read or hear about the issue but will not know what to do about it. The message should clearly articulate what the individual or policy maker can do to address the problem.

Assign primary responsibility. What individual or group is responsible for the problem you are trying to address? Who has the authority to do something about it? Frame your message in such a way that supports your goals and explains to others who can make the changes that are needed.

Make it practical. The solution you present should be communicated as practical, fair, legal, affordable and the right thing to do.

Develop pictures and images. If a picture is worth a thousand words and the average media Byte is seven seconds, it is critical to develop compelling visuals to illustrate your perspective.

Tailor your message. Remember to whom you want to speak each time you go to the media. Communities are fragmented with lots of different interests and concerns. Different groups respond to different messages. Tailor your message to your specific audience(s), and go to the most appropriate media outlet to reach them.

Information Technology: Learning for Change

Information technology has revolutionized the world, breaking boundaries and bringing people closer. For NGOs at a very local level, documentation and presentation has become more available, easier and efficient. At a larger level, it facilitates networking and sharing of ideas for better advocacy – in real time

Information technology is changing social, cultural, and educational patterns. But the poor and rural people, who are the vast majority, should not be excluded from the benefits of progress by the use of new information technologies.

Objective

- Learning to maximize use of Information Technology (IT) during the course of work, including planning and executing advocacy campaigns
- Familiarizing participants to the computer
- Exploring the relevance of IT to community/local groups
- Understanding the importance of IT for networks, particularly regional networks
- Exploring the Internet and its potential for adult learning

Time required	Material Needed	Expected Outcomes
1.5 hours	Computer terminals with access to the Internet	By the end of this session, participants will be knowledgeable about: • The Internet and its usefulness as an information sharing and learning tool • Using the Internet as an advocacy tool

Part 1

A discussion on Information and Communications Technology – does it bridge or increase the distance between the poor and the not-poor?

Divide participants into two groups. With ten minutes preparation time, one group should identify 5-7 points that bridge the distance and the other group to identify points that increases the distance.

Part 2

- Provide a brief overview of the internet and use of search engines (Google, Ask etc.)
- Give an assignment that requires participants to use Internet search engines to access relevant information
- Ask the participants to start an advocacy campaign on the Internet – through forming an e-group group, signature campaign, campaign for land rights or migrants rights, etc
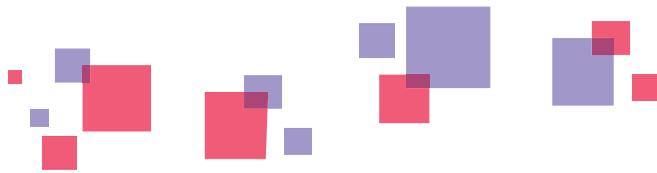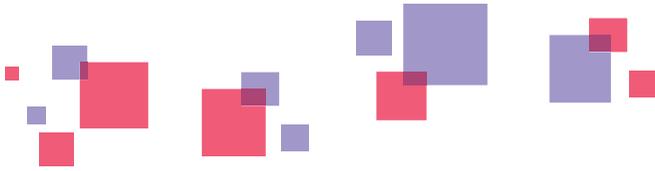
Notes to the Facilitator

Possible points that could come up during the discussion

Group – Bridging the Gap	Group – Increasing the Divide
Multi cultural mode of communication	Access is limited – infrastructure
Information is easily available - empowering	Language/Literacy limitations
Facilitates easy exchange of ideas	Decreased social interaction
Increases management quality	Too much information
	One global system – does not take into account differences in culture and history

Suggested Reading

a. ERIC Practitioner File: Critical Skill for the Information Age.

b. ERIC Digest No.197: Technology and Adult Learning: Current Perspectives by Susan Imel

c. "Information Rich - Information Poor, Bridging the digital divide (UK)" downloaded from the Internet on 14/10/199. Internet address: http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/speical_report/1999/10/99/information_rich_information_poor/newsid_466000/466651.htm

d. Adult Learning Documentation and Information Network (ALADIN) brochure

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