

tips for trainers

Quoting the issues

by ALICE WELBOURN

This exercise was used at a Skills Building Workshop in Bangkok, which I hadn't done before, but which worked really well. The workshop was on ethical guidelines for involvement of HIV positive women in research (see www.icw.org) and my co-facilitator, Violeta Ross and I wanted to design an exercise which would enable people who had never met each other before to engage quickly (for themselves and with each other) in the issues which we were trying to address in the workshop – we only had 90 minutes for the whole workshop...!

So we asked people to divide into groups of five. In each group there were people from different continents and from a mixture of backgrounds (e.g. academics, NGOs, HIV positive women, lawyers, pharmacy staff). We asked them to read together and discuss some quotes that we had printed out for them on strips of paper in advance. We gave each group five minutes to discuss each quote, and gave them a new quote to consider every five minutes – though they could go on discussing the earlier quotes if they preferred. For each quote, we asked them, as a group, to define what the problems were and, from their own experiences, to come up with suggested solutions to ensure that these problems wouldn't happen again.

Altogether we had prepared seven quotes, each one covering a different aspect of the issues that we wanted to cover in the workshop. In the end (what with people arriving late etc.) there wasn't time to discuss all the quotes. But all the groups discussed the first five quotes. The discussion in each group was intensive and lively and this process seemed to work really well in bringing the issues to life for the participants. At the end of the time available, each group was asked to summarise two key learning points from the discussions that they had had.

Several participants – even several seasoned participatory practitioners – commented on having had 'aha!' moments with these quotes. The quotes that we used are below, but of course they could be adapted for different contexts, from quotes that trainers have themselves heard from their own experiences.

Summary

This exercise seemed to work really well in putting 'flesh on the bones' of the issues being discussed; it quickly broke down barriers between participants who were strangers, produced lively discussions amongst them and appeared to shift the thinking of quite a few of those who took part.

She interviewed me in a room

with the door open, so people could hear what I was saying if they wanted to when passing in the corridor. But I was too scared to complain, in case she wrote something down about me being a troublemaker. She wrote down everything I said, and she offered to show it to me afterwards, but I can't read, so I said no, that's fine thanks.

I was feeling really scared about the interview, but was determined to help. But then when I got there, there was a student with her, which I hadn't reckoned on. She did ask if that was OK and I said no, I just want to talk to you. But then the student was obviously cross and didn't close the door behind her when she left the room. No, no one apologised.

All the questions were focusing on the bad stuff I'm going through. I felt so depressed by the end of the interview, that when I was on the bus, I just started crying. It thought it would be good to have the \$20 but afterwards I felt drained for days and just shouted at the kids. Life's hard enough without that.

What do these people do with all these questions they ask us? They come in their smart vehicles, ask us loads of questions and then they disappear again and you never hear anything more from them. I used to stop and help them, in the hope that they might help us but I never bother now.

You could tell that they didn't know the first thing about our lives. They kept on asking us about how long it takes us to get to the health centre and what we think of how the staff treat us there. When did we last have the time or money to get to the health centre? The trouble is you daren't tell them that because then our district chairman might get cross with us if he hears you haven't answered their questions correctly.

Yes, they always ask our leaders the questions. No, they never ask us anything. But you see they are very important people from the university, so I know they haven't got time to ask us all.

Well I tried to explain that if I didn't already have a child that I would have wanted to go ahead with the pregnancy, no matter what, just in the hope that the baby might be OK. But she said there wasn't room on the form for that answer, so I'm not sure what she wrote.

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Photographs

by REFLECT

There are various ways of using cameras to bring the power of the photograph in to the Reflect process.

Why? Photographs have the ability to really grab our attention and get messages across quicker or with more impact than other means.

Newspapers rely heavily on photographs to attract and keep their readers engaged. It is logical then that as part of their analysis of communication and power, Reflect participants should explore the power of photography and, where possible, experiment with using the medium.

When? At any stage

How? Effective work on photographs will include both taking pictures, and analysing their use by others. A set of pictures compiled by the group, or the facilitator, from newspapers, magazines, posters etc, can be used to stimulate critical discussion, in particular questioning the apparent neutrality of photographic images. Looking through the pictures, the group might think about why particular images are used, why they are effective, how the framing might be used to emphasise particular points, and what might be hidden, or out of shot. Is this what our world really looks like?

Provoking analysis through photographs: Powerful work can be done with photos that capture local problems or contradictions. A well-chosen photograph can enable

A powerful photo that makes the point that photos speak louder than words.

Or someone using cameras in a village in a clearly participatory process.

people to see something everyday from a fresh perspective, with fresh eyes. Seeing something from a "distance" can actually be a means to see something more closely than ever before. This holds true even where the photograph has been taken by someone within the group. At first participants describe what they see and they are progressively asked to analyse the picture until they truly confront the issue and its role in their own lives.

Introducing cameras: Cameras can be used in many ways within a Reflect process – and with the availability of cheap, disposable cameras it is now easier than ever. The main costs will probably be in the developing and printing of films, although sharing this information with the group can help people to focus their minds on the careful selection and use of images. As digital cameras become cheaper this process can be much easier to manage.

When first introducing cameras to the Reflect group it can be good to let participants take a range of photos without much direction or guidance. These images can then be subjected to the same critical questions used above, encouraging discussion of

Children in Malawi

The NGO Photo Voice have done remarkable work with Vietnamese street children, giving them cameras and basic guidance in how to use them – and then mounting exhibitions of their work to challenge attitudes and prejudices of others. At first kids took photos of themselves in fantasy settings – posing on parked motorbikes etc. However, they soon moved on, taking images of personal significance which offered a real insight into their world. Each photo is analysed to explore – why was it taken? What do you think other people will see in it and what is its different significance for you? [see *PLA Notes 39*]

subject matter, framing and the qualities of a good photo. Ground rules might be drawn up for future reference about what types of photo work best, the reasons for taking photos and when not to take a photo.

Using cameras for documentary

purposes: Enabling participants to photograph their reality can be very powerful. This could be for the purposes of a local exhibition, which may aim to capture the everyday life of the community or a particular slice of life, for example parts of traditional culture that are being lost, or the world from a particular group's perspective. The group then need to agree the range of photos to be taken and selected for exhibition. Captions may also be added to the photographs, requiring more negotiation.

Using cameras for advocacy:

Photography can also be a useful tool for advocacy work, taking evidence of people's priorities or problems to those in power, to complement oral or written arguments. Posters showing key images, or mobile photography exhibitions can help to reach larger audiences and build mass support or awareness for a campaign. A good photo can also increase the chances of getting an article



Photo: © 2002 Arzum Ciloglu/CCP, Courtesy of Photoshare

published in a newspaper (and read!).

Examples from Practice:

In Lesotho, Reflect facilitators are given cameras in order to record what is happening in their circle. They claim to have found this very empowering – as it enables them to document what is happening without having to write long reports. It also helps them to reflect on a different media of communication and related issues: what it means to have the power of framing a picture (what do you include and what not?) and the

power of editing (which photos do you show and why?).

Discussion of the photos can give great insight into the perceptions the facilitators have of their own circles and wider environments.

In Malawi Reflect trainers were given cameras to take photos of different literacy events or practices – to help them develop a sensitivity to the diverse ways in which literacy was used locally and the resources in the local environment that could help reinforce the Reflect process.

Ground rules

by **ANDREA CORNWALL** and **GILL GORDON**

When working with groups of participants in workshops, it can be a good idea for those involved to agree 'ground rules' for the discussions. This simple exercise suggests a way in which groups can come up with a set of ground rules at the start of a workshop.

Safety and confidentiality

Ground rules can help participants to feel safe expressing themselves and can reassure them that what they say will be treated as confidential and not repeated outside of the group exercise. By agreeing a set of ground rules at the onset, the group has effectively formed a 'contract' that can also be referred to throughout the rest of the workshop when necessary.

However, it is impossible to completely guarantee confidentiality in a group, so people can, if they prefer, discuss ways of sharing experiences that do not put them at risk – for example, by referring to experiences that happen to 'people like us' rather than personally. This is especially important when groups are discussing issues such as sexuality and gender when openness about relationship problems could, for example, lead to violence at home. Particularly, participants should take care about sharing private things that could be harmful to himself or herself or to anyone else if they were told to others.

There are other more complicated versions of this exercise, which look further at degrees of confidentiality, how to create a safe space, and how to recognise whether the rules agreed to are reinforcing the status quo of existing power dynamics (e.g. see www.mhhe.com/socscience/education/multi/activities/groundrules.html) but this exercise gives you some idea of the basic guidelines.

Brainstorming ground rules

Begin the exercise by asking participants to brainstorm a set of key 'rules'. Encourage people to make positive ground rules (dos) rather than focusing on prohibitions (don'ts). This can be done either in a group, and listed on paper; by individuals writing their thoughts on slips of paper; or by individuals or groups drawing images which represent different rules (especially useful as drawing does not require that participants are literate). The drawings do not have to be works of art, as you can see from our example!

Depending on the time you have available, and depending on how experienced participants are in setting ground rules, this exercise will probably take about 30 minutes. For groups of more than 10 people, it might be better to split them into smaller groups to begin with, and then bring the groups back together after 10 minutes of brainstorming.

Agreeing the ground rules

The whole group can then collate the different 'rules' that they have come up with, and have a focused discussion to agree which rules they want to use for the rest of the workshop.

Some examples of possible ground rules include:

- Let people speak without interruption.
- Don't pass judgement on others.
- Respect other people's thoughts and opinions, but challenge each other to think more deeply.
- 'Pocket your status': no one has a higher or lower status than anyone else – everyone is equal.
- It is fine to say you would rather not participate at any stage.
- Keep it confidential – no one will discuss what people share in the room outside of it.
- Avoid generalisations – say 'I think that...' or 'people like us think...' instead of 'some people think...' although if you are unsure about sharing private information, use generalisations to be on the safe side.
- Be aware of how much you are talking and leave room for others to contribute.

It is important for the facilitator to help people to think critically about the ground rules they generate together and to challenge conservative ones. Establishing rules such as 'challenging each other to

Drawing the ground rules – it's no Picasso!



Illustration: Holly Ashley Photo: Chi-Chi Tang

think more deeply' at the same time as 'don't pass judgement on others' can also be important. Simply asking that no one judge one another can lead to situations where every answer is correct and the acceptance of harmful attitudes etc. It might also be useful to see where rules are **not** working, which in turn might challenge the participants to think critically about **why** rules might not be as effective as anticipated.

This exercise is a learning activity in itself and if the ground rules are placed where everyone can see them and remind each other about them, it can help people to practice new ways of interacting.

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Fishbowl

by GILL GORDON

A group of teachers in Zambia on a workshop to develop sexuality and life-skills lessons and materials with their students



Photo: Vincent Mwale, PPAZ

Introduction

This activity enables people from different groups to ask questions of each other and get listened to in a safe way. Each group thinks of all the questions they always wanted to ask the other group on a certain topic. The groups discuss the questions from the other group. One group then sits in the middle facing inwards and answers the

questions whilst the other group sits around the outside and listens to the answers without speaking. The groups then change over.

We have used this activity with male and female teachers and pupils in relation to sexuality in rural Zambia and it helped people to understand each other's feelings, thoughts, hopes and fears more deeply and with more empathy.

Groups only explored thoughts and feelings about the opposite sex because it was early on in the project and the facilitators thought that more time was needed to talk about feelings for the same sex safely.

The activity generated a lot of questions from men and women on what they would like to know about the opposite sex.

How the fishbowl works

- Divide participants into separate men and women's groups.
- Ask participants to individually think of all the questions they always wanted to ask the opposite sex about their sexuality, feelings, experiences, behaviour, concerns and preferences.
- Write all the questions down or give them to the facilitator who can write them down.
- If the participants can read easily, give the men the women's questions and the women the men's questions. Otherwise the facilitator can read the questions out one by one to each group separately, giving each person one question to remember. With the groups, remove duplicate questions, merge similar questions and remove

any that the group are not prepared to answer.

- Give the groups time to discuss the questions in separate groups.
- Form a circle or **fishbowl**, with the women in one circle, sitting in the middle facing inwards in a group, and the men in another circle sitting on the outside.
- Ask the women to give their answers to the men's questions while the men listen silently. The men are not allowed to interrupt or ask questions, only to listen.
- Repeat with the men in the middle answering the women's questions.
- Bring the groups together and ask what they have learnt from the discussion and how they will apply that learning in their lives. Ask what issues,

topics or questions they would like to discuss further and learn more about.

- The facilitator adds issues that he or she feels need to be discussed further or challenged.
- Record the questions and the answers and make a note of issues that need follow-up.

The fishbowl activity can be used with other sensitive topics or to generate dialogue between groups on any topic.

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Ranking lines: exploring local indicators of wealth and health

by VICKY JOHNSON and ROBERT NURICK

A really useful tool that Development Focus has used in a UK context is a ranking line for determining local indicators of poverty and wealth, health, local environment etc.

It is really easy for people to interact with this tool on the streets as well as in facilitated groups. You can also start people off in groups by making physical lines with extremes at either end of the line – say good health and poor health, or lots of sleep and no sleep, or good diet and poor diet. People get onto different positions on the line and then say why they are there. They also discuss how they would take action to move up the line to the positive end. This physical exercise can also be used to introduce a team to concepts of relative positions, discussion of those positions on the line, flexibility to move on the line, indicators defined by participants and making tools action-orientated.

Visually, the line can be drawn out with a question that you are asking at the top or an issue you are exploring. Different visuals and words are then discussed and decided on by the team. For example putting a happy and sad face at either end, or putting the words, for example in a UK context 'skint' meaning poor and 'rich' at either end.



Photo: Development Focus

Above: A physical ranking line with young people from Save the Children's Saying Power Project.

Right: The Action 4 Living Team using a ranking line in a Newsagents in Lincolnshire

Participants then put sticky dots on the line with their reasons WHY they have placed themselves in a particular place below the line on post-its or cards. In a different coloured card they can put the reasons that people may find themselves at different ends of the line. Participants are then asked to put ideas for ACTION to move themselves up the line unless they are happy to stay where they are. From this, teams have been able to look at



Photo: Development Focus

The Action 4 Living Team collating and reviewing data back at base

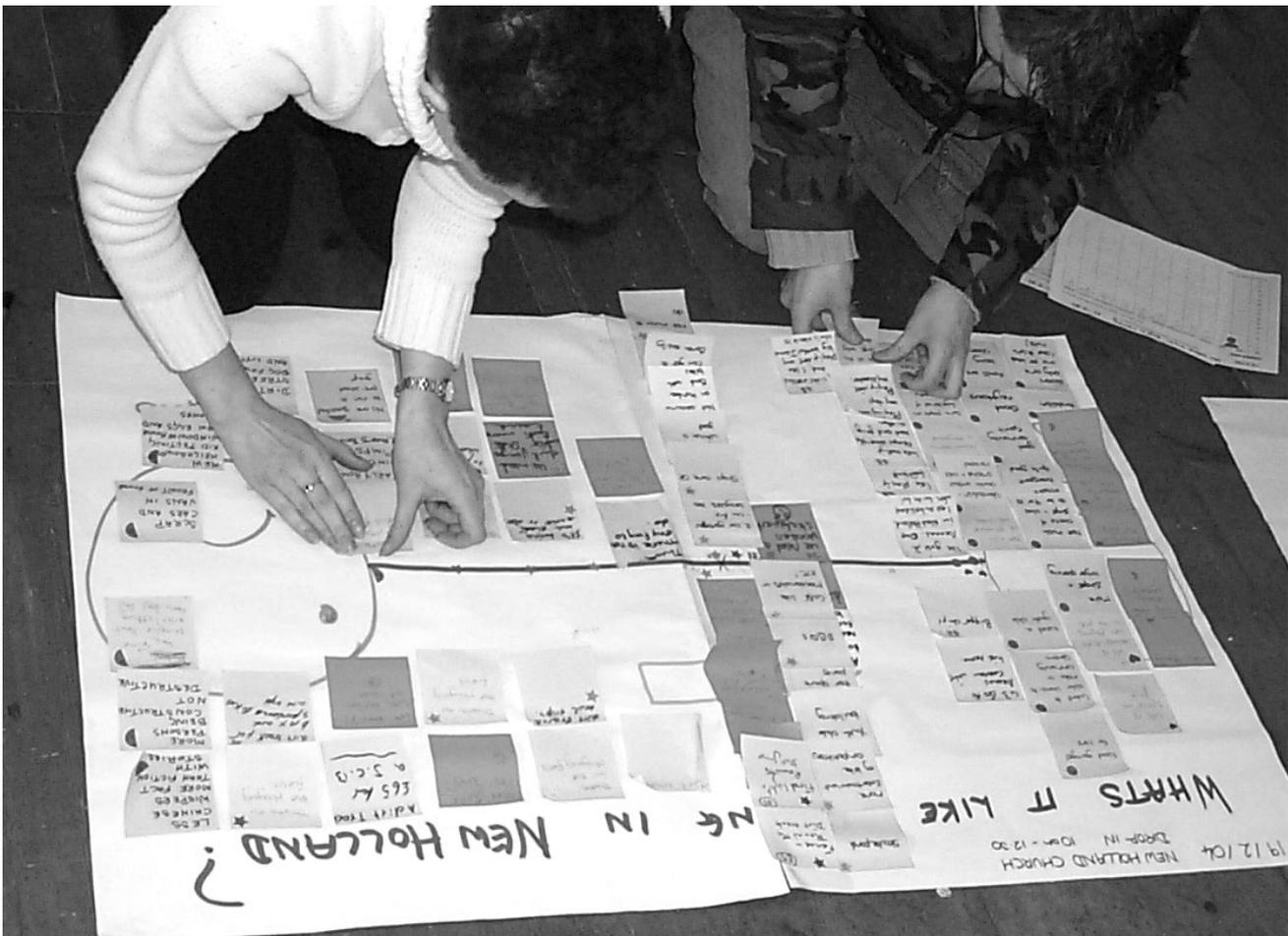


Photo: Development Focus

different local indicators defined by participants and ideas for action to take forward and explore further with further questions and tools.

Wealth Ranking lines can be a very useful way to start to explore local indicators of poverty, and to explore further and feed into

monitoring a process to ensure involvement of the poorest and hardest to reach people in a particular society.

Ranking lines can be useful in starting off, for example, local needs assessments and health action plans, or they can be used to start to

explore specific issues, such as food poverty or safety in the community.

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