

Module on Participation and Facilitation

Structure

3.1. Participation in community work

3.1.1. Defining Participation

3.1.2. Good Reasons to Promote Community Participation

3.1.3. Standards in Participatory Work

3.2. Practicing Facilitation

[+ recommended time ->6 hours]

Relevant KAP for Module

- Acknowledges the importance of involving communities in a participatory way regarding the abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).
- Has developed the skills to motivate and engage communities in a participatory way.

[+ Coffee and Tea BREAKS / 10 minutes]

3.1. Participation in community work (1,5 hour)

Participation is a fundamental right and one of the guiding principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Through participation, communities are empowered to become active around Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and to play a vital role in achieving or shaping the abandonment of the tradition.

This module is divided into two parts: in 3.1. you will find input on the issue of community participation with several exercises as well as descriptions of a few methodologies (in boxes and in the bibliography) to foster participation. In section 3.2. the participants will be asked to prepare and facilitate a short session on their own. In this part you can start with an overview of different methodologies either already used in part one or others that are useful to engage participants. We have listed links to explanations of other approaches in the bibliography for you to refer to.

3.1.1. Defining Participation

Participation describes a process in which communities play a vital role in the abandonment of FGM. It offers a space for girls and boys, women and men to express their opinions, share their ideas and views and become part of the decision making processes around FGM.

Three different approaches to participation are important to distinguish in the work against FGM:¹

- Communities as beneficiaries (functional participation) – e.g. local authorities provide a community centre for women’s group to meet and discuss issues around FGM
- Communities as partners (interactive participation) – e.g. a women’s rights organisation invites women from the community to jointly organise a cultural evening to sensitize on FGM
- Communities as leaders or initiators (self-mobilization) – e.g. communities develop and present a concept on how to involve men against FGM to the ministry for funding

3.1.2. Good Reasons to Promote Community Participation

It is important to involve communities in the abandonment of FGM in a participatory way, as participation

- is a right
- creates a stronger sense of understanding of why FGM has to be abandoned and prompts greater commitment / joint actions to protect girls and women from the tradition
- contributes to achieve more sustainable results by involving those people who are directly affected by FGM
- promotes dialogue and communication and contributes to reach consensus on issues around FGM and strategies or actions to end the tradition
- supports learning and empowerment and helps e.g. affected women to gain greater control over their lives
- builds self-confidence to speak out and to learn to be responsible for decisions taken
- contributes to foster teamwork and mutual support, e.g. from men in the quest to abandon FGM
- contributes to empower communities to hold governments accountable on the rights of girls and women

¹ Mostly based on the concept of the ladder of participation first introduced by Roger Hart in 1992, the literature distinguishes up to eight levels of participation (see Plan, 2008 and Bass et al, 1995, Table 1). We have chosen these three levels, as we consider them the most important to take into account.

Exercise: *Brainstorming* on Participation (15 minutes)

Material: Flipchart paper, markers

Ask the participants to think of what they associate with the term “participation” and why they think this is important for the work against FGM. Write the key words on a flipchart.

At the end, summarize what has been said and share missing aspects of the definition and reasons not touched upon during the brainstorming.

Brainstorming

This methodology is used to stimulate creativity and spontaneously gather ideas around a certain question/ topic from different people without discussing, criticising or evaluating the contributions. The goal is to gather as many ideas as possible in a short time by building on associations and combinations.

3.1.3. Standards in Participatory Work

Explain to the CHANGE Champions that as facilitators four basic standards have been selected which we consider important when involving community members in the work against FGM.

Exercise: *Individual, Pair and Group Work* on Standards of Participation (25 min)

Copy the four standards on pieces of paper², fold them and put them in a hat or basket. Ask each participant to take out one piece of paper, read it individually and think about it for a few moments (3 minutes).

Then ask them to share their standard with their neighbour. Both of them should think of examples of how to ensure their two standards are respected when working with communities on FGM. For example, it might be important to jointly set up and agree on rules of conduct at the beginning of a workshops.

After 10 minutes, ask each group to share their standards and examples with all the others. Discuss whether they can think of additional standards which are important to take into account when working with communities on FGM.

² If you have more than four participants, duplicate standards but then make sure that two people do not have the same standard (by e.g. handing them directly to participants).

Standards for participation:

- ❖ **Non-discrimination:** Everyone has the right to participate – in activities it is important not to forget those who are often excluded from activities, e.g. women suffering from FGM, young women, people with lower educational levels and those with weaker financial capabilities, people with disabilities. How can you reach out and engage them?
- ❖ **Trust and safety:** As FGM is a sensitive issue, it is especially important to create an environment of trust and safety for participants. How can you ensure that everyone feels safe and encouraged to voice their opinions?
- ❖ **Voluntary:** Participation is voluntary and if someone does not want to participate, you should respect that. How can you encourage those who might be timid or lack confidence to contribute while respecting if someone does not want to participate?
- ❖ **Diversity in opinions:** It is important to respect different opinions – do not force your opinion on others nor let individual participants do this. How do you facilitate if there is strong disagreement on an issue?³

Individual, Pair and Group Work

To involve everyone in an activity and take their opinion into account, it is useful to give a task to each participant individually or let them work in pairs. Especially for timid people it is easier to think about something themselves or discuss only with one other person.

Working in small groups (4-8), allows participants to jointly work together to develop solutions or share ideas, opinions etc. on an issue. It broadens the individual experience through dialogue and exchange. Small groups also offer members more possibility to participate and contribute with their ideas and experiences.

Taking up the first standard on Non-Discrimination, continue with the following fun activity (best with a group of at least 6 people⁴).

Exercise: *Icebreaker/ Energizer* on Participation and Inclusion (20 minutes)

³ Highlight that as a facilitator the CHANGE Champions should not take sides. They can support the discussion by specific questions: a) Ask for clarification, b) Seek an alternative opinion from the other participants, c) If an alternative opinion is not offered, provide one, d) Offer facts that support a different point of view. (source: Plan, Planting Equality. Facilitators Guide); also refer to “Tools for tackling difficult issues”, <http://seedsforchange.org.uk/tools.pdf>, page 12ff. or “How to Intervene in Difficult Situations”, <http://oqi.wisc.edu/resourcelibrary/uploads/resources/Facilitator%20Tool%20Kit.pdf>, page 9ff.

⁴ If you have a smaller group, you might decide to have only one group and tell them to try beat the existing record by other workshop groups.

Material: paper, scissors, glue, some rope to tie hands behind the back, scarfs or cloth to blindfold participants

Explain to the group, that the following exercise aims to improve their teamwork. Separate the participants into groups of at least three. Hand out an equal amount of materials to each group. Ask the groups to make the longest paper chain possible. Tell them that they have 10 Minutes for that. The group with the longest paper chain wins.

Stop them 5 Minutes after they started – shouting “Stop –accident!” Now tie the hands of one participant per group at her/ his back. Then ask the groups to continue.

After another 3 minutes, shout again: “Stop –accident!”. Now blindfold another participant per group and ask them to continue.

Stop after 5 Minutes and lead the discussion with the following questions:

- How did you feel (group and deprived persons)?
- Did the others integrate those with tied hands or blindfolded?
- What would you do differently the next time?
- What does this mean for our work against FGM?

Icebreakers/ Energizers

These exercises are interactive and fun activities related to the subject or the purpose of the workshop, often also used to re-energize the group. They not only address the cognitive level but aim for participants to experience an issue through a more playfully approach.

----- Include a break before continuing -----

3.2. Practicing Facilitation

(3,5 hours)

Exercise: Re-arrange the Classroom (10min)⁵

During the break, arrange a traditional classroom setting with chairs and tables in rows but with the teachers table at the BACK of the row of chairs.

When the participants return from their break, ask them to take a seat, and then walk behind them and begin the presentation on “What is a facilitator” (see below). The participants will need to turn around in their chairs to see what is going on - they will likely be confused and uncomfortable. After a few minutes,

⁵ Taken from

http://www.teindia.nic.in/files/teacher_trg_module/8_creative_facilitation_techniques.pdf, page 17.

explain that government institutions or other organisations often do not actively include communities in change processes. Instead communities are pushed into change by someone they cannot see and who decides, on their behalf, what they think is best for them. Explain that this way of instigating change is about as effective as conducting a workshop in this 'backwards' way.

Ask the participants to rearrange the space so that more effective learning, communication, and teamwork can take place.

Once participants have re-arranged the chairs, tell the participants that they will practice their facilitation skills in this second part of the session.

Give a short input on "What is a facilitator?"⁶

- A facilitator is not a teacher who is lecturing a group but supporting participants to develop new insights through analysing their own knowledge and experience and integrating new knowledge.
- A facilitator is an active unbiased member of the learning process.
- The facilitator guides and helps achieve understanding and consensus.

Continue with an overview of different methodologies to engage participants (see boxes above and additional links in the bibliography).

Then divide the participants into two groups. Each group will prepare a short session, in which the members of the other group will act as participants.

Task for Group 1: Ask the first group to design a session of 30min with a group of mothers.

Task for Group 2: Ask the second group to develop a session (of 30 min) with a group of men from the community.

Explain that their role is to facilitate a session in which their target group (mothers, men) is going to play an active role. They have 1 hour to develop their session. They should also identify who in their group will facilitate which section of the session – they can also facilitate in pairs.

Afterwards both groups facilitate their session with the members of the other group acting as either mothers or men.

After each group finished facilitating their session, discuss with everyone the following questions:

- How did you feel as facilitators/ as participants?
- What worked well? Where can they improve?

⁶ Based on: http://www.teindia.nic.in/files/teacher_trg_module/8_creative_facilitation_techniques.pdf, see the document for more information on facilitation requirements.

- How participatory was the session?
- What were the challenges?

Exercise: Evaluation (15min)

Material: pieces of paper, pens for each participant, a basket

To finish off the session, ask the participants to write down anonymously on a piece of paper what was the most important thing they learnt in this session. Collect the folded papers in a basket. Then each participant randomly picks a paper and reads it out aloud to the group.

Thank everyone for their participation in this session.

Bibliography/ Sources:

Plan India (2008), Guidebook on Children’s Participation.

Bass, Stephen; Dalal-Clayton, Barry and Pretty, Jules (1995), *Participation in Strategies for Sustainable Development*. In Environmental Planning Issues No. 7, May 1995.

Methodologies with bigger groups:

- World Café Methodology: <http://www.theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/world-cafe-method/>
- Open Space Methodology: <http://openspaceworld.org/wp2/what-is/>
- Fishbowl Methodology: <http://www.kstoolkit.org/Fish+BowI>
- Field Trip Around the Room: <https://www.usaidassist.org/resources/field-trip-around-room>
- Storytelling: <https://www.usaidassist.org/resources/storytelling>
- Walt Disney Methodology: <http://www.designorate.com/disneys-creative-strategy/>

Facilitation Advice and Tools

- Information on facilitation and examples of icebreakers and other facilitation techniques: http://www.teindia.nic.in/files/teacher_trg_module/8_creative_facilitation_techniques.pdf
- Facilitation Tools: <http://seedsforchange.org.uk/tools.pdf>
- Facilitator Tool Kit: <http://oqi.wisc.edu/resourceLibrary/uploads/resources/Facilitator%20Tool%20Kit.pdf>