

Facilitator Guide for the eLearning Course

Introduction

This Facilitator's Guide is intended to provide some helpful direction for facilitators who may be using the USICD CRPD Article 32 eLearning course as part of their training on disability inclusive development.

The following sections provide some basic guidance for facilitators wishing to use the online learning course in conjunction with in-person workshops. They include coverage of the following topics:

1. Using the eLearning Course as Part of In-Person Training Programs
2. Basic Principles for Conducting Disability Rights Workshops
3. Elements for Planning Successful Disability Rights Workshop
4. Facilitator Preparation Tips
5. Accommodating Participants with Visual Disabilities
6. Accommodating Participants with Hearing Disabilities
7. Accommodating Participants with Physical Disabilities

1. Using the eLearning Course as Part of In-Person Training

There are many ways in which the eLearning course may be used:

- It is designed to be a self-study course for those wishing to take it online, on their own and at their own pace.
- Second, it may be used in conjunction with online or in-person training. A facilitator might assign modules and then hold an online discussion allowing for group interaction or may use it as preparatory work for an in-person workshop.
- Finally, a facilitator might use the modules or any segment of them as part of in-person training. A facilitator might show videos or use the PowerPoint slides in any combination. Each set of slides has facilitator notes, allowing the facilitator to present the material.

2. Basic Principles for Conducting Disability Rights Workshops

- Connect people's lived experience directly to abstract concepts and legal documents. For example, many of the modules contain exercises designed to help participants identify barriers that persons with disabilities face in accessing the benefits of development. It is important to connect real-life examples of barriers to strategies to dismantle these barriers through international cooperation programs that are disability inclusive.
- Examine human rights ideas and concepts in an open-ended manner, allowing participants to arrive at different positions than those the facilitator might have.

- Explore human rights these locally and globally by looking at how issues manifest themselves in the local context and elsewhere in other regions. Disability inclusive development will look different in different contexts and cultures. This must be acknowledged and understood. In other words, there is no “one size fits all” disability inclusive development approach.
- Avoid too much of a focus on human rights abuses. Emphasize that human rights are a positive value system and a standard to which everyone is entitled, and the focus should be action-oriented and on identifying and removing barriers that persons with disabilities experience through disability inclusive rights-based approaches to development.
- Affirm the idea that individuals can make a difference, provide examples of individuals who have done so where appropriate through disability-inclusive development.
- Include action dimensions to the program, providing participants with opportunities to create tools for use in their advocacy.
- Link topics or issues to relevant CRPD principles and standards – never forget the big picture!
- Respond to cultural diversity. Activities should reflect a variety of perspectives (cross-disability, race, gender, religion, cultural/national traditions).
- Make sure the learning process itself respects the human rights principles set out in the CRPD such as participation, inclusion, accessibility, respect for difference among others.
- Keep lecturing to a minimum. Use participatory methods for learning such as role plays, debates games, simulations, etc.

3. Basic Elements for Planning Successful Disability Rights Workshop

- Design workshop in a funnel-like format: Move from the general, big picture, engaging participants personally, drawing on their lived experience, then become increasingly focused on specific disability rights issues and advocacy strategies as you draw the workshop to a close. The workshop should move towards some personal commitment and action with participants.
- Promote participant ownership of the workshop by: (i) Seeking consensus in decision regarding the direction the workshop should move; and (ii) Returning periodically to the agenda to be sure you are on the right path with the participants (the end of each day should have program team debrief and reassess agenda for next day, lunches and breaks offer additional opportunities to assess and adjust).
- Choose activities that are sensitive to differences among participants (be sensitive to disability accommodations – for example, if using PowerPoint, be sure to read out slides exactly for blind participants).
- Help participants feel part of something larger than the workshop itself (e.g. the global process in which disabled activists are working to develop an international convention that is relevant locally).
- Encourage participants to articulate what they have learned.
- Provide participants with follow up support as they begin to introduce disability rights concepts into their work or connect to the UN Convention process.

4. Facilitator Preparation Tips

- Be respectful of all participants and their needs (disability accommodations, need for breaks, need to spend more time on one or another issue).
- Know the level of experience of participants and their understanding of workshop issues.
- Know the exercises and expected outcomes. Be sure to understand the exercise so that you can explain it clearly to the participants.
- Be creative. Be prepared with more than one way of explaining important concepts, processes, and instructions in cases where participants are confused.
- Be flexible. Be prepared to adjust the original plan – this is expected and if anticipated, can be handled smoothly.
- The Importance of Summing Up: Facilitators should use summing up to succinctly but clearly restate the main points. Facilitation should include frequent summaries of the discussion as it develops. This includes both content and people's positions, whether it has been said or communicated in other ways (e.g., through non-verbal cues such as body language, facial expressions or with an agreed set of hand signals). Summaries are a good way for the group to be more aware of what stage agreement has reached, and it can also help people who are blind or have low vision or are hard-of-hearing as well as learners with intellectual disability – but summing up makes the session accessible for everyone.

5. Accommodating Participants with Visual Disabilities

Barriers for persons who have visual disabilities include light levels, handouts, flipcharts, and whiteboards, and keeping track of the discussion - particularly if hand signals are used. Preprinted materials should be made available in a variety of formats including large print. Although handouts can be adapted or recorded, it's obviously impossible to prepare all content, for example things in writing as part of an idea storm.

In some situations, personal support may be useful, and the facilitator can help by providing more detailed summaries. These could include interpretation of hand signals (and other body language) that people are using, e.g. "I see that most people are waving agreement to that point, but some of you aren't..."; "some of you seem really enthusiastic about that proposal, but I see that others aren't looking too excited" and then finding out whether there is agreement.

Asking all participants to say their name prior to speaking and using names rather than pointing is helpful. This helps orient blind participants as to who is speaking.

6. Accommodating Participants with Hearing Disabilities

Persons with hearing disabilities, especially those who are hard of hearing may find large or echoing spaces and background noise at venues (such as traffic, buzzing strip lighting, other groups talking in the same room) challenging. The person concerned will usually know how they can best participate in a spoken discussion. Some ideas for facilitators are as follows:

- The facilitator should summarize regularly, providing another chance for the flow of the discussion to be understood.
- Make sure everyone can see each other clearly (to allow lipreading; to make sure sound isn't impeded by others' bodies).

- Write up all points on a flipchart or whiteboard (these can be used as clues to provide context, allowing educated guesses at whatever hasn't been heard).
- Make sure people (especially the facilitator) speak clearly, not too fast, and look towards the deaf or hard of hearing person.
- People should take great care not to talk over each other - only one person should speak at a time. The facilitator should be strict about this.
- Have enough spaces available so small groups can work in different rooms to avoid background noise from other groups.
- Provide Human support (e.g., notetakers; speech to text operators) can sit with hearing impaired people to write, type or speak summaries.
- Provide a Language Service Provider where needed (e.g., a lip speaker or Sign Language Interpreter). Contact a local disability rights organization well in advance.
- Finally, technical solutions may be relevant - induction loops at venues are common, but don't always work too well, so do check them before the meeting.

7. Accommodating Participants with Physical Disabilities

Addressing physical access must be undertaken at the time of site selection and modifications must be addressed well in advance. Some general tips are as follows:

- Familiarize yourself with the venue – what is the access like (parking, entrance, steps, handrails, ramps, etc.); is there an accessible toilet?
- Arrange the room in an accessible way – table placement, chairs removed from some spaces to allow wheelchair access, ramps to any speaking platform, table heights, etc.
- Summarize and publicize access information in advance of your event - this sends a clear signal that you are prepared to adjust and provide assistance and helps persons with disabilities assess whether they feel they can take part.
- As a facilitator, you may also need to consider difficulties in speaking or using hand signals.
- Plan the group's movements and physical activities (e.g., icebreakers, energizers, role plays and hassle lines as well as breaking into small groups) in such a way that they are inclusive.
- Things to watch out for here are: enough time and space to move and providing alternative suitable activities and where people are going to be positioned during exercises: sitting on the floor can create barriers for people with mobility impairments and blind people - those unable to sit on the floor will be at higher levels and may feel isolated.