

# Helpful Hints for Facilitators

- **Work together with LEAP or DME practitioners.**

Remember that your expertise is in gender and it's important to partner, particularly in Module 4, with a facilitator whose expertise is in LEAP/ DME. The facilitator you partner with should be very familiar with the material presented in Modules 1-3, and can then give participants a solid foundation in the integration of GAD tools with LEAP. You may also want to team up with sector and programming track specialists for sessions in Modules 5 – 8.

- **Relax!**

One challenge of facilitation is that you are working with a live and always unpredictable group of participants. You can never know with complete accuracy how a particular exercise or discussion is going to unfold with a given group. What if a discussion falls completely flat? What if you go over the time limit and have to revise the schedule? What if one participant becomes unexpectedly hostile and changes the group dynamic? What if a participant asks a question you can't answer? Shouldn't a "good" facilitator be able to ensure that every workshop goes flawlessly

Don't worry! These unpredictable aspects of workshops contain the very seeds of growth and authenticity. Participants may learn very little from a completely flawless workshop except that sometimes they do go perfectly. For the most part, staff in your workshop will face these same challenges as they implement gender training. They need to be prepared to think on their feet and possess the confidence to deal with whatever happens.

Watching you use your own experience to work with a difficult situation or group is the best "classroom" they could have

- **Recognise Your Strengths, Strengthen Your Weaknesses**

Every facilitator brings a unique set of strengths and weaknesses to these sessions. At the beginning, work from your strengths (leading a discussion, sharing content, directing a role-play, or even something simple like setting the right tone for a coffee break).

However, be aware of areas in which you need more experience or support, and ensure

that you have extra resources and practise in those areas.

- **Experience Counts**

Few professional skills depend so much upon experience as training or facilitating. Every workshop increases one's ability to respond quickly and effectively to group dynamics. As a facilitator, gaining experience is extremely important.

- **Modeling**

As a facilitator, you do not have to know all the answers. What you do have to know is how to help workshop participants find resources or build a network that will help them find answers. This is a process you can model at every opportunity.

- **The Instant Replay**

After a workshop, "instant replay" is a helpful tool to examine group dynamics and improve facilitation skills. You do not have to videotape the workshop to replay and evaluate it. Just develop and improve your skill in active reflection on the dynamics of the workshop. With practise, you should be able to sit back and "watch yourself" interact with the group by recalling events and discussions after the workshop is over. What would you do differently next time? Make a plan to incorporate these improvements, and write down any notes you may need as reminders.

- **Colleagues Count**

As you facilitate, do not forget to nurture collegial relationships. You now have another set of professional colleagues to discuss the challenges and joys of facilitating GAD workshops. Send books, websites, new networking contacts, and new ideas for the workshops. Check in frequently to see how they are doing. Expect ideas, books, articles and project documents back from them as well.

- **Training Portfolio**

A great way for all trainers and facilitators to track their growing experience in training and facilitation is to maintain an active portfolio of workshops they lead. Evaluation notes, participant names, content covered, as well as exercises used and enhanced, can all be a part of this portfolio. Additionally, when you go to visit or follow up on staff participants' progress, viewing the training portfolio is a great lead-in to discussions about their growth and experience.

*A facilitator* — is a nurturer, an advocate and a role model.

*A facilitator* — contributes his or her experiences, perceptions and concerns on issues covered in the workshop.

*A facilitator* — always checks his or her value systems.

*A facilitator* — remembers that workshop participants may have different opinions on the subject.

## Non-verbal Facilitation Skills

- Make eye contact with everyone in your workshop group. Focus attention on every participant. Don't favour some over others.
- Move around the room, as you speak in a slow, calm way.
- React to what workshop participants say by nodding, smiling. In short, let them know you're listening.

## Verbal Facilitation Skills

- Formulate your questions to encourage candid responses and open discussion.
- Use open-ended questions such as: "What do you think about...?", "Why...?", "How...?"
- After one workshop participant makes a statement, ask the others if they agree.
- Encourage workshop participants to talk. Participants should talk more than you and any other facilitators do.
- Encourage workshop participants to answer each other's questions. In that way, everyone can learn to listen and to show respect for each other's responses.
- Ask workshop participants to paraphrase or repeat something in their own words to check whether they understand a particular concept. You should also paraphrase important points made by workshop participants, both to reinforce their statement and ensure that you have understood them accurately.
- Regularly summarise the discussion. Ask workshop participants whether they disagree with anything, and help them to draw conclusions.

## Facilitation Reminders

- **Be Respectful.** Facilitators need to model respectful behaviour. It is crucial to be sensitive to workshop participants' individual differences and perspectives, as well as any discomfort participants may experience in discussing an emotional or personal topic.

- **Be Non-Judgmental.** Don't reinforce stereotypes. Keep the group's focus on facts and solutions.
  - **Establish Safety and Ground Rules.** Ask participants what they need from you and from each other in order to feel safe while talking about sensitive issues. If a discussion becomes heated, remind participants that they are always to disagree respectfully, without resorting to name calling or insults. Another way to create a safe space for workshop participants is to set up a "question box" in which participants can anonymously pose questions that might be difficult to raise in front of peers. You can then read aloud and answer questions without referring to individuals.
  - **Honour Diversity.** While dividing participants for small group exercises, aim to create heterogeneous groups that mix participants by age, race, ethnic background, departmental unit, and position in the organisation.
  - **Exercise Humility.** Don't feel that you have to be the world's foremost expert on gender issues. If you don't know something, admit it. If a workshop participant raises a difficult question, ask whether anyone else has an answer. Or, if the question is important, state, "My current understanding is that... but I'll look into this further." Or say, "That is an excellent question. To be frank, I don't have the answer, but I'll find out for you."
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## THE FACILITATOR'S ROLE: WHAT IT IS AND ISN'T

IS	ISN'T
Positive	Cynical
Optimistic	Holding hands
Tough	Solving problems
In control	Negative
Motivating	Timid
Supporting	Sarcastic
Leader	Superior

Entertaining with a purpose	On an ego trip
Inspiring	Giving magic answers
Happy	Lecturer/teacher
Raising awareness	Rigid
Confident	Boring
Clear	Know-it-all
Organised	Counselling service
Approachable	Distant

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