

1994

### ARRANGEMENTS FOR ONE- AND TWO-DAY PRA WORKSHOPS

These are a guide. Please feel relaxed. Something is always missing, and usually several things go wrong. I am also liable to be cross about something before we start. Take no notice.

#### Numbers

There can be too few (e.g. with less than 10 some of the participatory things are not on), but space and equipment permitting, I would not want to set an upper limit. The most who have stuck it for two days is about 100. Quite often it is 30-80. That is fine. Mixtures of organisations, disciplines, ages, experience... is fine.

#### The Room

**Nightmares:** lecture theatre with banked seats; cramped conference room with fixed tables screwed to the floor and microphones; air-conditioning, fans and traffic which drown speech; brilliant sunlight which makes slides invisible.

**Ideal:** a flat room with plenty of space. A dais or stage does not matter - can be ignored. Chairs and small tables that are easy to move. Half the room for sitting, and half empty. Plenty of wall space on which charts can be put up (with masking tape etc). Windows which can be made dark (curtains, blankets, whatever) for showing slides. Floor best without carpet, but if with carpet, not with thick pile. Wall or moveable blackboard(s)/whiteboards good if they are there.

**Acoustics:** always nice if a microphone can be avoided. If essential, then the clip-on-and-walk-around type without a wire is best. But can manage with whatever there is.

**Arrangement:** with smaller numbers (under 30) sitting at tables in 3s or 4s is OK for starting, with other tables around the walls. With larger numbers, usually best with all tables round the walls, and chairs in a U shape, several Us deep, so that all can see the screen, boards etc.

#### Equipment

Ideal for presenting material:

- Overhead projector (?spare bulb)
- Slide projector (circular carousel slightly preferable, but long ones OK) (?spare bulb)
- Extension lead(s) as necessary
- Screen (ideally large one that angles forward). White wall can also serve.
- Flip charts on stands (2 if poss.)
- Pens for flip charts/white boards (either new or not dry!)
- Masking tape (usually best, leaves no mark), or bluetak, or Scotch tape, for putting charts on walls

- Screens for posters if there is little wall space
- Video (optional, see below)

Needed for participatory activities:

- Flip chart sheets (roughly one per participant per day)
- Different coloured pens for flip charts (roughly one pen per participant)
- Coloured (also white) chalks (roughly one box for 10 participants)
- 5-6 types of seeds of different colours, including white, black, dark brown etc. Small, light, round seeds are bad. Large, heavy, flat seeds are good. Butter beans OK. Dark tropical tree seeds often very good. Total at least 50 (and 100 OK) seeds per participant. (Don't lose sleep over the calculation. If you can afford it, get more rather than less. They can usually be eaten or planted if not used)
- Masking tape (or bluetak, or Scotch tape). One per 10 participants
- Post-its (sticky labels which can be stuck up) (two per participant) (I usually bring these, but extras can come in useful)
- Large scissors (a few pairs) can come in handy

#### Options

- Pre-workshop reading. If you are able to send papers out to participants in advance, please let me know. I will send you at least one (about 12 pages) to copy and send if you are able.
- Video. I will probably bring several videos. One or more can be shown at lunchtime, or in the evening of a 2-day workshop. Or bits can be shown during sessions, but this often messes up. A good alternative, if feasible, is for participants to see videos before or after the workshop
- Name tags for participants to write their names on and wear. Less workable for a one-dayer with large numbers. Useful for a two-dayer with 30 or fewer participants who do not all know each other (for seed mixer)
- List of participants with addresses
- Photocopying of overheads. Sometimes people ask for these. I can lend the overheads for this for photocopying on the same day. I need to take the transparencies with me
- Copies of papers on display. Sometimes people ask for these. Some are free on request if written for. Others, which are fairly short, can be left for photocopying. You need to decide whether you will provide this as a service, for whom, and on what basis. Easiest is to do lots of copies the day before or on the day.
- Translation. I can just about do this in French, but other than that we are stuck with English. If someone has to translate, a session with her/him in advance is useful. If materials can be translated in advance, let me know.

#### Timings

The more participatory the workshop, the less easy it is to be precise about timings. Flexibility over timings for coffee/tea, lunch break etc makes life easier. But tight timing is also (just) possible.

### Outside

Everything can be done in the room, but it is good to go outside into passages or better out of doors, weather permitting. It is a matter for judgement whether permission is needed before e.g. mapping on a car park. Don't worry if there is no feasible outside

### Setting up

Surprisingly, it can take 1-2 hours to set up a room, especially if the starting position is a normal classroom layout. It is much the best to do this the evening before, including siting and testing the OHP and slide projector. Failing that, it is vital to arrange to be able to get into the room 1-2 hours before starting.

LEAVE BIG NOTICES ASKING JANITORS NOT TO RESTORE ORDER TO THE SEATING

(more than once I have come back in the morning to find the classroom layout put back again in rows. Grrrrr)

### Peace

Don't worry if you can't do all this. Workshops have been held in terribly cramped conditions, without OHP, slides or proper wallspace. Sometimes the best things happen when the electricity fails or the slides jam. Many sorts of improvisation are possible. In a Cairo hotel when I asked to see where a workshop would be held, a staff member took me to a small bedroom with double bed.

"But we may be 30 people" I said.

"No problem. I fetch extra bed?"

Enjoy.

18 January 1994

Robert Chambers

prawkarr.doc