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Guidelines for blended workshop development

The purpose of this document is to provide short non-exhaustive guidelines for the preparation and execution of blended workshops for visually impaired and sighted participants. The content presented hereafter is to serve as a basis and can be altered, depending on the specific needs and location of said workshops.

1. Select a topic, based on your expertise

In order to ensure that the workshop is beneficial to the participants, select a topic or a theme that you have expertise in. It is important to give the most to the participants and be secure in the content/information you are sharing. In cases where the workshop is led by someone substituting, it is recommended that he/she/they take notes on all questions raised by the audience, and such are answered at a later stage by the expert.

2. Determine and get to know the participants

Knowing the profile of the participants is of crucial importance, especially in cases of more complex activities and when creating a longer-term workshop programme. Being informed on individual expertise, experience, limitations and needs, will support the creation and implementation of useful and impactful workshops. For instance, if you know that there is a participant with learning difficulties, this can be taken into consideration when planning both the time allocated, as well as the approach used. The age of the participants, language abilities etc. might also influence the way the content is presented.

3. Prepare and include a visual awareness session as the start of the workshop or workshop series

Due to the fact that the workshop is for a mixed audience, namely v.i. and sighted participants, an introduction to visual awareness is of crucial importance. Walking the sighted participants through the basis of the topic, is required for the successful and safe conduct of the workshop. It will not only improve the general understanding, but will raise the awareness and will support the sighted participants in being alert for potential risks and able to help if/when needed.

4. Select location

Selecting a non-traditional location (lecture hall, classroom, meeting room, etc.) can have significant added value to your workshop. The location can be tied to the topic of the workshop-historical location, theatre, related to traditions, nature sight, etc, or to the specific learning objectives. This can be an opportunity to immerse the participants in the topic, allow them to try new things and for the v.i.- to have a tactile experience if/when possible. What is important however, is make sure that all participants are safe.

5. Conduct a risk assessment



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Ensuring a safe environment is fundamental and taking into account potential risks is paramount. Such include location related risks (see next point), health related risks (injuries, allergies, etc.) and exclusion, among others. Conducting a risk assessment will support the preparation and implementation of the workshop and is to be utilized for the integration of both prevention and mitigation measures. A template is provided below as an example.

6. Use the environmental checklist

In order to ensure the safe environment, it is also necessary to fill in an environmental checklist. This checklist has the purpose of assessing the location and is to be used as a risk prevention tool. A template is provided below as an example.

7. Make a plan regarding needed assistance, necessary materials, etc.

After evaluating the profile of your participants, their needs, taking into account risk prevention measures, etc., workshop specific elements are to be covered. Such include the inclusion of experts, practitioners, translators, as well as securing all the necessary materials. Budget should also be taken into consideration, as such limitation may alter how the workshop is implemented. A template is provided below as an example.

8. Create step by step instructions (easy to understand, multiple ways of providing the information)

When designing the workshop, particularly in cases where the person creating it is not going to be one leading it, step-by-step instructions provide both structure and clarity. Each task or activity is to be described in detail. If there are more complex tasks, it might be beneficial that instructions are provided beforehand, so as to allow time for preparation. Furthermore, what should be considered is sharing such information in more than one way: on paper (using large clear fonts), using digital tools, explanation, or by showing what will need to be done. The last might be combined with allowing the v.i. participant have an opportunity for a tactile experience.

9. Keep a clear structure and time schedule

For a workshop to reach its objectives, a clear structure, introduction and setting time parameters for each task is important. Be aware, that additional time should be allocated in case of such might be needed by a participant/s. Flexibility will be beneficial to all who take part in the process.

10. Be ready to provide support when needed

Even when there is a detailed plan is prepared, and the workshop leader has the necessary expertise, participants might need additional support. This might take the form of needing additional instructions, more time allocated for tasks, actual support in conducting a task, etc. The workshop leader needs to allow time and be ready to provide any and all of the above. If required, delegating some of these tasks may be allocated to another/other participants. These may be appointed prior to the start of the workshop, they need to agree and be prepared to provide such support.

11. Conduct an evaluation

In order to be sure that all the learning of objectives of the workshop have been achieved, that all the participants have felt included and that the activity was successful, simple observation is not enough. It is recommended that a formal evaluation is conducted at the end. This evaluation can be done



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through a sharing circle, or via a questionnaire distributed during or after the workshop. For the v.i. participants, a digital version of such a questionnaire is preferable. Overall, this would also provide an opportunity to collect feedback, recommendations for improvements and thus upgrade any following editions of the workshop. An example template of such a short questionnaire is included below.

PROPOSED TEMPLATES AND EXAMPLES

As indicated above, as part of these guidelines, some templates and examples are included, in order to support workshop creators and leaders.

Risk assessment

- **Local/experienced guide (when on location) is required**
- **Risk of injury: First aid preparedness (during active, on location workshops) is required**
- **The timing of the event may be affected by religious holidays/practices/restrictions/ cultural values/ cultural gestures**
- **Foreign or hearing-impaired participants: Translation is needed**
- **Sensory kind space is needed as the group is mixed**
Have the following in mind:
 - choose not over stimulating space with colors, posters, smells, light, etc.
 - make sure the workshop space is big enough,
 - limited to no background noise
- **Wheelchair users-ensure accessibility**
- **V.I. participants: Make everyone present themselves in an orderly manner, indicating their position, and with good articulation, environmental checklist, contrast, size of font, possibility to send material advance**
- **Participants with learning difficulties: Ask for suggestions from the group about alterations in the activity- all activities can be adapted, allow for additional time for explanation and practice; when needed, present the information and instructions in different ways**
- **The workshop leader cannot manage on their own: Peer leaders can be assigned in sessions, providing support; expert can be involved**
- **Participant cannot reach the location: if the workshop and/or activities are at a location that is not easily accessible, arrange transport if/when possible**
- **Allergic reactions: consult about dietary requirements and allergies prior to making any food arrangements**

Environmental checklist



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Room/Location:
Time of day:

1. Colour and Contrast

1.1 Good examples

(write your comments here)

1.2 Bad examples

(write your comments here)

1.3 Suggestions for improvement

(write your comments here)

2. Signs / posters

2.1 Good examples

(write your comments here)

2.2 Bad examples

(write your comments here)

2.3 Suggestions for improvement

(write your comments here)

3. Lighting and glare

3.1 Good examples

(write your comments here)

3.2 Bad examples

(write your comments here)

3.3 Suggestions for improvement

(write your comments here)

4. Texture

4.1 Good examples

(write your comments here)

4.2 Bad examples



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(write your comments here)

4.3 Suggestions for improvement

(write your comments here)

5. Noise

5.1 Good examples

(write your comments here)

5.2 Bad examples

(write your comments here)

5.3 Suggestions for improvement

(write your comments here)

6. Clutter

6.1 Good examples

(write your comments here)






6.2 Bad examples

(write your comments here)

6.3 Suggestions for improvement

(write your comments here)

Workshop planner

-  Workshop title:
-  Proposing organisation/individual:
-  Country:
-  Goals of the workshop:
-  Target group:



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- ✚ Recommended participating group size:
- ✚ Learning and practical outcomes.
- ✚ Location
- ✚ Duration (*recommended duration of each workshop/including separate tasks, including prep time*)
- ✚ Necessary materials and/or equipment (*separate for what is already available, and what will need to be acquired; budget to be considered*):
- ✚ Step by step instruction:
- ✚ Video/Audio/Photo/Other materials

Workshop Monitoring/Evaluation

- Do you think the workshop achieved its objectives?
- What did you learn?
- How did it enhance your skills?
- What were the main takeaways for you personally?
- How do you think you can use what you learned in your day-to day or work?
- What additions or changes would you make when/if you implement it in your home country?
- How do you feel after your participation?
- Was an additional risk assessment required?
- Were the instructions sufficient?
- Has the workshop participation inspired new entrepreneurial ideas?