Ethiopia
Protection of Basic Services
Social Accountability Program

Social Accountability Guide

First edition

Chapter 13 of 13

Ethiopia
Social
Accountability
Program
Phase 2

MANAGEMENT AGENCY
Multi Donor Trust Fund

Contents

0. Contents

13. Delivering the Training

This chapter is intended for the grantees only, and addresses the preparation and actual conduct of training during the rolling-out stage.

13.1. Preparation of the Training

13.1.1. Development of the training programme

It is important to setup a balanced training programme, in which sufficient time to reflect and absorb are allowed for.

Balancing theory and exercises

An appropriate mix of theory and practice will help to keep participants concentrated and interested in the training. Experience shows that theory can best be explained in the morning when participants are fresh, while exercises are often done after the lunch in the afternoon. Allow for sufficient and timely breaks, and do not limit breaks for training, as this will be very counter-productive. Participants have a limited absorption capacity.

Include recaps

Every day (except the first day) should start with a short recap of the previous day in which participants are asked what they - in general - remember from the previous day, what were eye-openers, what was difficult or easy, and how they experienced the training. Do not take more than 15 minutes for recap, try not to be complete and avoid going into details. Try to include also the silent participants and use the recap to create an open and inviting atmosphere.

Divide sessions over the trainers

Since the training will be conducted by a team of trainers (max. 3 trainers), try to have different trainers conduct consecutive sessions. A variety of trainers will stimulate the participants and help minimize the chances of monotonous and unidirectional conduct in which participants are not actively involved. However, do not divide the training days between the trainers.

Framework for the training program

In section 0.4.3 a skeleton for the rolling-out training programme is provided. As is also explained in the same section, after an awareness-raising workshop at woreda level, a maximum two specific Social Accountability tools will be selected for further training on day 3 and/or 4. For the other days the program has already been prepared.

The training programme for day 3 and 4 can be easily completed. Go to the chapter related to the respective Social Accountability tool (Chapters 5 to 10). In section 3 of these chapters you will find the trainer notes for the orientation, and for the rolling out. In the latter section, the table provides a cell containing the timing of the different parts of the session, which can be copied into the respective day of the training programme. If only one Social Accountability tool has been selected, the fourth day can be deleted from the programme.

13.1.2. Preparing the training materials

Now the training programme has been developed, the respective training materials need to selected from this guide, and if necessary, amended.

On the first day the participants will receive the training programme, with attached to it the overviews of the respective sessions. The numbering of these overviews will be synchronized with the programme. Also, in each session overview, the name of the trainer conducting that particular session will be inserted. The sessions on day 3 and 4 related to the selected Social Accountability tools can include multiple trainers, and in such a case it needs to be clearly indicated which trainer is conducting which part. It is important that during the first day, preferably during the first session, the training programme and attached session overviews are briefly explained.

Next to the above, for each session a set of hand-outs need to be printed in sufficient amounts. These hand-outs can always be found in the second section of the respective chapter in this guide. Again, remember that the numbering should be adjusted to correspond with the training programme. The distribution of these hand-outs will be at the discretion of the trainers.

Regarding the slides, and as explained in section 5.5, remember that these have been standardized, and will periodically be kept updated by the MA. Before all trainings, the MA should be contacted to confirm that the latest version of the slides are being used. It is not allowed for anyone to alter the slides, or use a different set of slides than those provided by the MA. Further, if changes to the slides are deemed necessary, please contact the MA so that changes can be made and that all other users can benefit from this feedback.

Often participants request during a session a hard copy of the slides of the PowerPoint presentation. If an LCD projector is being used, it is advised to distribute the slides only after the session has been completed, in order to keep the attention of the participants on the trainer. If no LCD projector is available, hard copies of the slides can be distributed. Please assure prior to the training that sufficient hardcopies of the slides are available. It is not permissible to distribute electronic copies of the slides to participants upon request.

13.1.3. Arranging for the training venue and preparing the training room.

In order to conduct an optimal training session, it is of high importance to arrange for a training venue that can accommodate all participants, and can allow for each participant to actively and comfortably participate in the training. Preferably this is a training room that has sufficient wall space the for the flip chart, a constant power supply for the LCD projector and laptop, and a room with dimensions that allows the trainer to be on full view at all times for all participants (e.g. no intrusive pillars that block the view), spacious enough to allow various groups to work somewhat in isolation, and isolated enough from external interference (e.g. no next-door construction activities). It is appreciated that at woreda level it can be difficult to find such accommodation, and the training sessions might have to be conducted in less optimal conditions. Most important is that the training venue is considered to be suitable by both the trainers and the participants.

As a trainer, make sure that sufficient tables and chairs are arranged for, and set up in a way that matches your preference. Often it is useful to check the training room the day before the start, and discuss the layout with the persons responsible for the room hire.

13.1.4. The Social Accountability Tool Box

Each grantee will be provided with a Social Accountability Tool kit, as described fully in section 0.8. It is the responsibility of the grantee to assure that the contents of this toolbox are checked sufficiently in advance of the training, in order to allow the MA to arrange for replenishment. The tool box will provide you with the bare essentials for the training, and the trainers should check their trainer notes to see if additional materials are needed or require preparation before the training begins. Give youself plenty of time to do this!

Invitations

As to assure a high participation level, it is important to send out the announcement with a tentative programme as early as possible to the woreda for their follow up. The grantee should discuss with the woreda about the prospective participants and assess with them who finally gets invited. It should be articulated, understood and agreed that only participants that can partake the full training are to be invited, and that participation is personal and cannot be transferred to a colleague.

Inviting a woreda council member or sector head might be appropriate for the orientation training, but they are often not involved in the implementation of the project at woreda level. There should be a distinction made between people who can give support and share information, i.e., like woreda council member, and those who will assist in the implementation of a Social Accountability Tool (citizens and service providers).

It is important to inform the head of CBOs, Iddirs and other woreda institutions such as sector offices, of the importance of this project and the potential role and benefits their organization could gain. This will ensure support from within the institution and attach the appointment of an appropriate representative to the project.

Finally, state clearly in all correspondence the purpose of the training and the type of anticipated participants. For instance, if you are hosting your rolling out at woreda level, it is far more appropriate to invite a project officer or community development worker as opposed to the accountant of a community based organization.

13.2. Conduct of the Training

If all the above preparations have been made, then the training can start. It is a good habit to visit the venue the day before to do last checks and finalize arrangements.

13.2.1. The Start of the Training

Another good habit is to be in the training venue an hour before the start of the training. This allows you to set-up the equipment, do any last minute adjustments, to accommodate the room and cheerfully welcome the entering participants. Make the training room your own by arranging all the necessities as you see fit, as you are in charge of the training. Open windows if need be, and adjust lightning and temperature to make sure you are comfortable.

13.2.2. Time Management

It is advised to start the training at the time indicated on the training programme, but only if more than 50 per cent of the participants are there. If there are less than 50 per cent of the participants present, thank the participants that are there for their prompt arrival, and announce that you will start as soon as 50 per cent of the participants have arrived.

Timing is of great essence. Try to adhere to starting and closing on time as much as possible, and point participants to respectfully adhere to good time management, as the training schedule is tight. It is important to keep repeating this, as it is difficult to reverse non-adherence once it has started.

Also, if more time is needed for a session, do not use the break or lunch time for this, but continue after the break with the session, and reduce the next session to accommodate.

13.2.3. Absenteeism

As mentioned above, participants are expected to partake in the full training programme, and attendance sheets should be filled in, every day, in the morning and in the afternoon during the sessions. It is not permitted to accept a replacement person sent, but in case of an emergency, participants can request explicit exemption from the trainer team while providing a reason.

13.2.4. Ice Breakers and Energizers

It is useful to start sessions with an ice-breaker, for instance a short puzzle, riddle, or assignment to create an open and informal atmosphere. Also, when it is noticed that participants are tired it is useful to break for a moment and do an energizer for 5 minutes. This will help to refresh and is often highly appreciated by participants. It is often noted that after lunch this is mostly needed, as temperatures are higher and food is being digested, both reasons for participants to feel sleepy and in need of energizing exercises.

13.3. Training Approaches

13.3.1. The Role of the Trainer

In many traditional training environments, the trainers act as experts, and the participants are the recipients. The trainer often lectures in a unidirectional way. Although this is very common, and still often used in schools and the academic world, the effectiveness of training adults this way is very limited. More effective is a bi-directional way of training in which a much wider range of attention, knowledge and experience is available to all the participants. The trainer is merely facilitating the exchange of views, experiences and knowledge between participants and not acting as the expert (although occasionally providing expert input and stimulus, but only when it is necessary to help progress the session).

This facilitation role is often difficult to adhere to for trainers, as they are not at ease with the perceived limited control, they often have never practiced this or seen it being practiced by others, and cannot fall back on their role of authority. This all adds to an increased mistrust of the trainer. It is therefore useful to make it explicit that the trainer is not acting as an expert (although they may be), but is "only" facilitating discussions to maximize the sharing between participants. This puts the trainer on the same level as the participants, and similarly is not expected to know all the answers to all the questions. Although the trainer must have partially mastered the subject matter already and studied the trainer notes in full, this is only because the role of the trainer is central to this program.

The trainer's role is to create a conducive environment that is based on the knowledge and experiences of the participants. The trainer should focus on the following during the training:

- Drawing out the experiences from participants: these can be issues of how they access services and the quality of the service they receive

- Listen to participants' views and know there are no wrong questions or answers: participants' views are important as they can tell you much more about their community and the challenges faced by this community
- Include contributions from everyone in group work and plenary discussions: People are often shy at first but it is important to give everyone an opportunity to talk and also to be aware of any power relations in the room.
- Identify and manage conflict where it arises: Conflict can easily arise as there might be prior tension before the workshop or people may have divergent views. This must be managed to ensure that the training objectives are met.
- Avoid giving solutions and definitive conclusions: The solutions to challenges should come from the participants and not the trainers. You can help them structure their thinking but they should have ownership of these solutions.

The following descriptions are of the three work forms that can be helpful in assuming that role.

Work form 1: presentations

All sessions include presentations that are to be delivered in an open and inviting way. The slides deliberately provide only limited - often bulleted – information. The trainer is expected to discuss and expand on the subject with the participants, instead of reading aloud what is projected on the screen. The trainer thus needs to introduce the subjects and then invite the participants to reflect on these, stimulate the discussion and to make sure that the same persons don't always respond. The trainer thus has to have a keen eye for the dynamics in the group and the power relationships between them. Also, the trainer might have to tactically mention these dynamics in an occasional way, to make everyone aware of them, and potentially to stimulate the group to be more responsive.

While presenting the slides, it is important to regularly check whether participants have understood truly what has just been said. You can ask the group in general whether they are still with you, or you can gently ask individual participants who might look lost, whether you should repeat the message in a different way, or whether they would like an example.

Sometimes, even after returning to a subject, it still appears that some of the participants do not understand it. Try to identify clearly what exactly they do not understand, before explaining again. Also you can always ask another participant to try to explain again.

Sometimes only a few of the participants seem to be lost and explaining again may hold-up the whole session. In such a case, it is advisable to propose to those participants that you will happily explain the issue during the next break.

So as to keep the presentation lively and interesting, it is useful to make use of various presentation aids. So besides the slides projected on the screen, it will be good to write down important messages on a flip chart, or use coloured cards during presentations. Also trainers can invite participants to use cards for their presentations, or as a tool during discussions.

Work form 2: Group exercises

Most of the sessions include group exercises. In the trainer notes it is described what the set-up of the exercise is, and the instructions for the participant are provided either on a slide or on a hand-out. In most cases the groups have to be randomly formed. The idea is that participants have to work together on an assignment in varying constellations. Also it has to be avoided that groups are formed around existing organisational working relationships, unless this is explicitly indicated in the trainer notes. If the same groups continue to form then it is advisable to rearrange them to give everyone a chance of working together.

While the groups work on their assignment, the trainer passes from group to group to listen to the discussions and to take note of their progress. The trainer should minimize their role, and refrain from answering questions, unless they are related to the instructions. Also, participants often ask for confirmation whether they are on the right track. Depending on the situation you can provide some slights corrections, but avoid becoming the expert who explains the answers at every stage. Even if participants cannot come up with any answers, they will have learned what the difficulty has been, to pay more attention to the plenary explanation and to ultimately try and remember the lessons better.

As a trainer this role may be a bit discomforting, as participants may interpret this as an unwillingness to help. In such cases, please explain that it is the purpose of the exercise that they learn, together, from each other. Avoid staying too long with one group (max 3 minutes), and pay attention to whether all group participants are indeed participating.

Often participants believe that there should be only one correct answer. Sometimes this is true, but more than often the interpretations or views which are shared are much more important than the actual answer. Make participants aware that learning is more than just gathering knowledge and answers.

As to allow cross fertilisation between the groups, it is often part of the assignment that the groups use a flip-over chart in a plenary discussion to present their group's results.

Work form 3: plenary discussions

The group exercises are always closed by a plenary presentation. To avoid these going on for too long and going into too much depth, and since all participants have gone through the same exercise, it is advisable to only allow 3 minutes for each group's presentation. After each presentation the participants are asked to comment or ask questions.

As the trainer it will be important to assure that the key messages of the session come across, and to note the similarities and differences between the presentations. You can also ask participants whether they note similarities or differences.

13.3.2. Stimulating Participants

In all three work forms the trainer will often have to ask questions to stimulate the group thinking process and group discussions. It will also be important to ask questions that are not too closed (yes/no), but rather questions that would stimulate thinking and discussions. Keeping questions short and simple helps to keep the questions as clear as possible.

Also, ask one question at a time, give time for participants to think, and do not hurry them, or answer the question yourself or fill in what you think the participant should say. This will kill the discussion and spoil the atmosphere. Try also to include the more silent participants by directing questions to them.

When participants answer questions, they have the tendency to address the trainer and not the other participants. In such situations, please request the participant to repeat the answer to the rest of the participants.

Often, participants shy away when they have to address a group, or speak too softly, too long or become inarticulate. Ask the participant to repeat in short by speaking up a bit, or if necessary repeat what your understanding was of what he/she said, and then ask whether you summarized their response correctly.

Sometimes participants are in disagreement on a subject, and may start to quarrel and ask the opinion of the trainer. In such cases the trainer will need to be neutral, and not take a position. If it is a relatively small issue, you can ask the participants to exchange their views, and moderate the discussion a little. If it is a more serious issue, you will have to remind the participants to keep the discussion outside of the training, as it is disruptive.

Sometimes a participant can be challenging to the trainer. Most often this is done by asking difficult questions or disputing what the trainer has explained. Although there is no standard recipe for such situations, it is important to first ask the participant to share his concerns with the trainer and the other participants. The trainer can ask the other participants whether they have the same concerns and/or suggestions, then propose, if possible to take these into consideration. In most cases this will be sufficient. In case the participant continues to challenge the trainer, it will be important to confront the participant by pointing to the disturbance it gives to the other participants, and to ask the participant to stop or else leave the training. But this is rarely necessary.

13.4. Monitoring and Tailored Support at Woreda Level

The regions of Ethiopia are diverse and based on ethnicity and cultural practices. Therefore certain practices in training can be seen as culturally insensitive and should be adapted for different regions and woredas:

13.4.1. Gender and Women's Participation

In regions like Afar and Somali, the presence of women in public life is very minimal. This also means they are very rarely involved in any of the decision-making processes in their woredas. When conducting training, it might be appropriate to first create awareness of women's participation and the benefits of this, prior to conducting the training. There might also be a need for firstly creating safe spaces for women and young girls to participate and voice their issues in, and to bring the men and women together to share their points of view later on. At times, women might feel threatened to voice their views freely when there are men from the community in the same room.

13.4.2. Authority Roles

As the ESAP2 aims to build an improved relationship and dialogue between the service providers, service users and woreda officials, this type of dialogue is often very foreign to the communities, as they rarely have had experience in questioning authority. There might be a need to start with separate interventions. Communities might feel more able to question and discuss service delivery without the service providers they are discussing being in the room. The service providers might also feel they can share their views more without their woreda officials and superiors being in the same room as them. Therefore, it is important to understand the dynamics and power relations in a woreda before conducting any training with your intended target audiences.

13.4.3. Practical Issues

The implementation of a tool will take several days to weeks, and support will be tailored to actual needs. It will be important to assure that, irrespective of the type of tool, at the end of a training day, the results attained are collected for further use on the next day.

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