- *Tolerating Ambiguity:* an intercultural situation can create a state of flux, where the norms, assumptions and patterns of communication which we take for granted are not recognised, shared or accepted. Yet at the same time, a training situation demands our involvement in a process where communication and interaction must continually happen. Intellectually and emotionally, this kind of process can involve insecurity and frustration and the adoption of defensive positions. Developing a tolerance of ambiguity is a way of reflecting on and operating with uncertainty, it is a prerequisite for ridding oneself of a reassuring vision of the world without immediately providing the security of an alternative vision (ibid, p35). It involves active tolerance and analysis, learning to accept insecurity while putting those elements which create insecurity under the microscope.

In the *Intercultural Learning T-Kit* you will find different approaches to structuring intercultural activities (pp 21-32). The following points are nearly always addresssed by intercultural pedagogies, and a reflexive consideration of them is central to the self-development of these key skills, not to mention facilitating their development in others:

- Learning to know oneself in one's social and cultural context.
- To actively learn about the world and the possible interconnections of different realities.
- To reflect on one's attitudes, values, perceptions and behaviour in relation to both general social analysis and specific group interactions.
- To approach communication as a negotiated cultural process which requires constant attention to both verbal and non-verbal aspects, as well as the development of new skills.

Suggestion for Reflection

Consider TE-10 in section 3.5.3 in relation to your experience of intercultural learning

1. *Comfort Zone:* what makes you define the chosen situation as comfortable?
2. *Stretching Zone:* what stretched you? Can you relate it to any of the factors above? How did you cope with the situation?
3. *Crisis Zone:* How did you react to this crisis? Which of the key competencies outlined above are relevant to the situation?

3.3 Strategies and Methodology

3.3.1 Training strategies

The next step in the building process is to design a training which reflects your desired learning outcomes, and caters for a variety of learning styles and speeds. A training strategy can be looked upon as the way that you plan the flow of the program; the logic by which the content will be developed and the methods assembled with consideration to the development of the group dynamics. There are elements to this which are clearly not rocket science; for example, not beginning a course with a plan for future action, when the aim and project have not even been defined. Yet a training strategy is important, as it brings together for the first time the interconnectedness of the training elements. TE-15 (see 5.1.3), the theme-centred interaction model, illustrates this interconnectedness.

It could be seen as illustrating training in general (5.1.3) but in this context it signals the specific and interdependent elements which need to be considered in a training strategy. The *topic* is the aim of the training, the reason why everybody is there. It represents the themes and form of the meeting. I is each separate person involved in the training, be it team or participant, who bring with them expectations, different learning biographies, knowledges and experiences in relation to the topic, and so forth. *We* is the group, and represents more than just a physical collectivity. It is the group as a collective process; with a cultural existence involving the development of communication patterns, shared assumptions, dialogue on values, atmosphere, roles, avoidances and other dynamics. Finally, the *globe* is the context in which the training takes place, ranging from the physical and material conditions to the organisational considerations and the relation to the 'real world'.

The triangle suggests that within the globe, these different elements of topic, individual and group should have balanced relations. Each axis of the triangle allows us to ask questions which shape the training strategy, the following is not an exhaustive list:

- *Topic – We:* what level of experience of the topic should the group have? What different experiences exist? Is the training inductive (providing framework and orientation to group) or deductive (allowing group to set framework and orient themselves)? What expectations do we have in relation to group contributions to the topic? How do we relate the development of the group to the development of the topic?
- *We – I:* How do we approach individual expectations in relation to the group? What kind of space exists for the individual within the group? Does working time and methods reflect both group and individual needs? How do we deal with conflicts?
- *I – Topic:* what expectations do individuals have in relation to the topic? What do they want to learn? How does the exploration of the topic cater for different learning styles and rythms? What responsibility does the individual have for their own learning, and what possibilities to contribute? Are there individual questions of language competency, or any other factor which needs to be addressed?

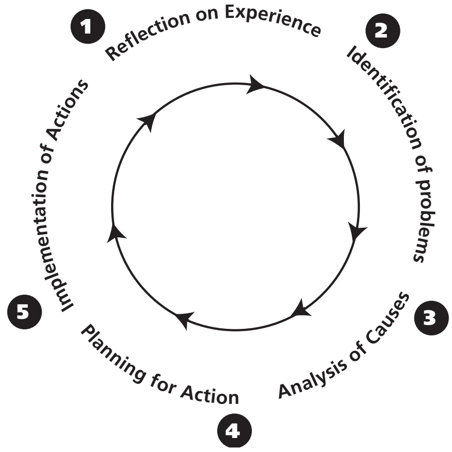
The *globe* must then be factored into all of these relationships; possibilities and limitations of the working space, finances, expectations of the organisation(s), etc.

We can examine a practical example of a training strategy in relation to the globe. The circular diagram (TE-7) illustrates the *Psycho Social Method of Social Analysis*, developed by the World Studies Project (1976:4, in Leahy, Anne 1996:20). This training strategy is based on the premise that knowledge is generated by a reflection on and synthesis of social experience. It therefore incorporates strong mutual relationships between the three points of the triangle; the topic is developed by the group reflections, which are a synthesis of individual experiences, experiences which are more fully interpreted by the benefit of group work and the focus provided by the topic. As the cycle develops through the five stages, the training is advanced by the constant interplay of these elements.

While this particular model has been developed for social analysis, with particular reference to development education, it is applicable to a range of topics if the premises it is built on reflect the training strategy you would like to adopt. Within the strategy, there are still enormous decisions to be made. The strategy provides the flowchart of the training, that flow needs to be realised by introducing the methodology that will facilitate the training.

TE-7

Psycho Social method of Social Analysis



3.3.2 Methods and Methodology

Question – what's the plural of method? Answer – methods, not methodology. This is the first point that needs clarification in this section. A method is an activity which you plan, it gives a framework to a certain part of the program. It could be an energizer, a simulation game, a lecture. Methodology, on the other hand, is the educational logic of the methods chosen. The simulation exercise *Ecotonos* is a method, simulation is a methodology based on a philosophy of experiential learning. Therefore your methodology is closely related to the training strategy, it is the rubric by which the individual methods are chosen. It is the overview of the methods in the program, looking at the balance of types, how they relate to learning styles, individual\group activity, and so on. What this also suggests is that choosing a method is not a simple question of finding activities which will fill the time frame available to you. This section addresses the range of questions which should be considered before a method is decided upon.

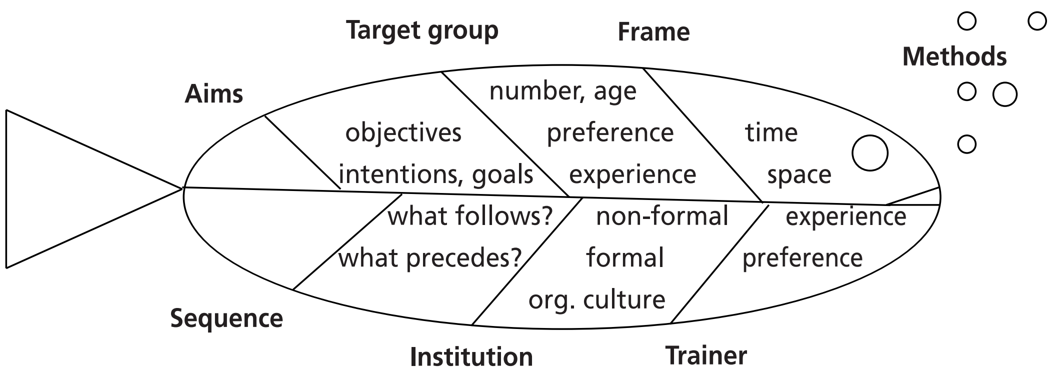
A method is the point at which all of the training planning is presented to the participants. As such, it is responsible for communicating alot about this prior process. A five hour lecture on participation and citizenship without questions or toilet breaks may seem a little odd. The method chosen and the relations between the axes of the triangle which it represents would not seem to fit with the values being espoused by the content or the training. At a fundamental level then, the method must relate to the vision and purpose of the training – in other words, the underlying values, overall aims, and specific objectives. The method chosen must fulfill a specific objective and also represent a system of values central to the whole enterprise. If we begin to collate a checklist of questions which can be referred to when choosing methods, then the initial ones would be:

- Is the chosen method in line with the values that are transmitted in the content and by the aims of the training?
- Can the method deliver the objectives specified for this stage of the training strategy? (Complete this sentence: at the end of this session I would like to say that participants…..)

These questions are also useful for teams to take stock of their shared understandings. Clearly, if team members are answering differently to these questions, a review of the process may have to be undertaken.

To begin relating the methods to an overview of factors, we can, like the ancient Romans, turn to the insides of the fish.

TE-8



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The bubbles the fish breathes represent the methods, these have been generated by passing through the entire body. By looking along the ribs, we can check the factors which have influenced this. We can also relate these to the elements in the globe. Relevant questions to consider in relation to the group may be:

- How does the methodology reflect the reality of the group, in other words, are different methods used in the overall program which respond to different learning styles, needs and speeds?
- What kind of communication does the method encourage in the group?
- Does the method contribute to the process of group building, or is that an issue at this point?
- What levels of trust and familiarity does the method presume in the group?
- How does the method correspond to your understanding of the group dynamics at this point?
- How does the method address the group needs and responsibilities at this point in the training strategy?

Within these group considerations, we can add a further set of questions concerning the individual, and address that axis of the triangular relationship:

- Does the method consider any individual biographical information that may be relevant? (age, education, language, socio-cultural background, previous experience)
- Does the method allow active participation of the learner?
- Does the method engage more than verbal-intellectual skills?
- Does it give time and opportunity to the learner to get into contact with her feelings, interests and thoughts?
- Will the learner realise that she is responsible for her learning and personal development?
- Are questions raised that motivate further investigation, training, exchange or study?'
- Does the method raise reactions and emotions that can be dealt with in the context?
- Does the method presume certain physical capacities on the part of the participant?

The method has an obvious relationship to the topic, it is chosen to advance the exploration of the topic at a particular moment. Thinking back to the training strategy, the method needs to be related to the objectives of the content and the relation of the trainer and group to the content at that moment:

- What prior knowledge does the method assume? (intellectual, emotional, etc)
- How does the method relate to what has gone before and what will come after?
- How does the method value and incorporate the contributions of the group?
- What information is provided by the trainer, and what is left to the participants to supply or find themselves?
- Which elements of the topic are prioritised by the method at this point, and why?

And finally, the globe also suggests a range of factors which have to be taken into account.

- Is the method feasible?
- Is the method secure physically and safe pyschologically?
- Are the necessary materials available and budgeted for?
- How does the physical environment impact on the choice of method?
- Is there enough time, alowing for small delays, to complete the activity and fulfill the objectives?

Note: many of the questions above were suggested by or adapted from a handout "Considerations for the Design of Training Programmes and the Choice of Methods", by Antje Rothemund, for 'Training for Trainers', European Youth Center Budapest 1998, (itself adapted from Gerl, H: «Methoden der Erwachsenenbildung» in Pöggeler, *Handbuch der Erwachsenenbildung*, Stuttgart 1985).

Suggestion for Reflection

1. Having studied this list of questions, can you add any more to the different categories?
2. Are these suggested by particular experiences?

3.3.3 Methods and the Trainer

Ultimately of course, the success of the chosen method depends on the trainer delivering the trainer. Somebody once said that trainers are human, and that is probably true. Nevertheless, like so many other areas of life, some simple precautions can guard against unwanted outcomes. A method which involves a group in an experiential learning situation is not an exact science, and there is great value to be had in unexpected contributions and directions. These can only be valuable however, if the trainer is aware that they are unexpected, and can relate them to the objectives and anticipated flow of the session. Basically, a trainer needs to feel comfortable with the method, and confident in their capability to see it through. The following statements can act as a guide to assessing the suitability of the method to you as trainer. The questions are particularly suited to the process of choosing methods for intercultural learning:

When choosing methods, the trainer should……

– Feel confident and convinced about the method.
– Whenever possible, have experienced the method fully as a participant (or be part of a team where people have had that experience and can workshop it with the rest of the team)
– Be in a position to anticipate the outcomes but also deal with unexpected ones
– Be aware of the place of their own opinions and interpretations, and work with the interpretations and associations of the participants
– Make the objectives of the program unit clear, while avoiding dogmatic facilitation.
– Try not to use methods that might cause feelings in participants or the group which cannot be dealt with during the training.
– Accept that some people may not wish to participate in a particular exercise.
– Have a carefully worked out strategy for debriefing and feedback, which can also be adapted to deal with unexpected outcomes.
– Be aware that learning is change, and that this can be an uncomfortable experience. Participants may make the method (or, indeed the trainer) responsible for their discomfort. The trainer has to carefully analyse whether the discomfort was caused by the method or by the feelings and discoveries elicited by the method.

(Statements adapted from Rothemund, op.cit).

A checklist of this nature can be qualified – it obviously depends on a range of factors specific to the training context. Yet it also raises issues concerning the role of the trainer and trainer's ethics; how she sees her relation and power to the group, what it is acceptable to ask people to do, and so forth (see also 1.2.3).

3.4 Logistical considerations

Organising a training course is like preparing yourself for a journey. One of our grandmothers used to say the better you prepare your luggage, the easier the time you will have. And we think she's right. She never said much about youth work, but a training course is the same. The better you prepare it, the better prepared you are to expect the unexpected. This section takes a conventional division of three phases, and considers the practical and logistical issues you will encounter before, during and after. It is also worth bearing in mind that while the course is usually the most attractive phase, conducting an complete training means placing equal worth on every stage.

The following table is very general and contains the basic elements that need to be considered when preparing and running a training course. It presents the logical sequence of mainly administrative actions that need to be taken. We have avoided suggesting a time frame as this depends on many variables and specific features, from the nature of the training to the size, needs and traditions of the organisation. As a general rule, you could think of our granny, and don't underestimate the time that some administrative tasks may take, such as visa requests.

3.4.1 Before

SEQUENCE	ACTION	CONSIDERATIONS
1	– Needs assessment – Decision on the topic – Decision on date, hosting organisation, types of event and deadlines	Each organisation has it's own structure and its own decision making process, but this is normally the first thing you have to do: investigate and assess the needs and aspirations of your members and identify the most suitable topics for training
2	– Research available grant and necessary conditions [5] – Write the grant application	It is extremely important not to underestimate the length of this procedure, check also the precise schedule for each grant.
3	– Request placed with hosting organisation and confirmation sought	A clear and detailed list of requests and expected support should be submitted to the hosting organisation to allow it to decide if they are willing and able to host the event. Information about facilities for disabled should be sought at this stage. A preliminary date is set for the preparatory team meeting and the seminar. The exact venue is organised by the host organisation, with a confirmation about its suitability being given by the preparatory team and/or the responsible of the event when it has been seen during the preparatory team meeting. In some cases the event venue requires a deposit. Do not forget to ask about a cancellation fee
4	– Selection of the preparatory team	Organisations normally follow their own internal selection procedures, but should pay attention to questions of multiculturalism and gender in the team composition. It should be clearly stated what expectations are held regarding the experience and commitments requested from the team.

5. Different grants are available both at national or international level. At international level in the frame of Europe both the Council of Europe and the European Union provided grant for youth activities under determined conditions. For more information you could look at the following website: Council of Europe: http://www.coe.int, or European Union: http://europa.eu.int

SEQUENCE	ACTION	CONSIDERATIONS
5	– Preparatory team meeting	The preparatory meeting is ideally held at the venue. The invitation to this meeting should include an agenda for the meeting and detailed information useful for the preparation of the event such as resolutions or policies, the funding application, reports from previous events and so forth. During the meeting the objectives, program, session contents, working methods, participants profile, and team responsibilities are decided. The exact dates of the seminar are also confirmed. Immediately following the meeting the responsible of the event sends the report to the planning team.
6	– Possible interpretation staff	When the dates of the seminar have been confirmed the responsible could contact the interpretation company to check their availability, stating what facilities are available at the venue, what needs to be hired, and cost of possible cancellation.
7	– Invitations to experts and external trainers	If expert speakers have been included in the program they should be identified, contacted and briefed by the preparatory team. Do not forget to update them on amendments to the programme and to forward the materials you send to participants.
8	– Invitations to organisations and participants	Following the preparatory meeting, an invitation to the event is written. The invitation is sent to all target group organisation and potential participants. The invitation should contain aims and objectives of the event, working methods, participants' profile, application form (including dietary requirements, language abilities), travel form, visa request, instructions for disabled access and a clear application deadline. Don't forget to mention conditions for cancellation.
9	– Shortlist of applicants and send-out of acceptance letters	Based on the criteria expressed in the participants' profile the preparatory team shortlist the candidates and send them acceptance letters. These normally contain detailed information about the program and venue, how to get there and instructions for payments. Attention should be paid to disabled people who would like to attend. They should be provided with accurate information and all the necessary action to allow them to participate should be taken.

SEQUENCE	ACTION	CONSIDERATIONS
10	– Liase with host organisation on visa requests	Once the visa requests have been received they are sent to the hosting organisation, which issues the invitation to obtain the visa. Attention should be paid to the fact that a lot of countries have particular requests and formalities that need to be respected.
11	– Payment of participation fee	Some organisations require the payment of a participation fee beforehand by bank transfer, others by cash upon arrival. This means that precise bank details should be provided and the relevant currency indicated.
12	– Preparation of relevant documents and materials	Once the number of participants is clear material and relevant documents for the activities can be translated if necessary, and photocopied for the preparatory team and for the participants as appropriate. (This material could also include a certificate of attendance)

3.4.2 During

SEQUENCE	ACTION	CONSIDERATIONS
1	– Preparatory team meeting	It is advisable that the preparatory team arrives before the participants. This is to allow some time to review the program and to consider it in relation to the expectations expressed in the application forms. Last minute tasks and problems (arranging accommodation and meeting rooms as appropriate, finalising the preparation of material and a welcome pack with the necessary information about the venue and the event) can also be dealt with.
2	– A range of administrative tasks, including checking payments, correcting the list of participants, relevant claim forms. Depending on the grant received, there could be the possibility of claiming for loss of earnings, or equivalent claims.	The participants are asked to check their details, then the list can be amended and distributed. Precise instructions should be provided for completing claim forms, in the event that they are provided for in the overall grant.
3	– The daily report	Participants may be responsible for writing a daily report. These reports are later used as the basis for the event report. See *4.4.8* on report writing
4	– ‘On the spot’ reimbursement	If participants need a cash reimbursement, ask them to complete the appropriate expense claim. Attach all receipts or ask participants to forward them as soon as possible. In this case, take a copy!
And	– ALL THE REST!!!	The team shouldn’t be overwhelmed by these administrative tasks, remember there is an educational program as well…

3.4.3 After

SEQUENCE	ACTION	CONSIDERATIONS
1	– Travel and loss of earnings reimbursements, as applicable.	The responsible of the event should pass all the claim forms to the appropriate person in the organisation to proceed with reimbursements.
2	– Thanking the team, venue and hosting organisation (letter, fax or small present as appropriate)	The responsible finds the most appropriate way to thank the venue, the host organisations, the expert speakers, the planning team
3	– The report	Depending on the practice of the organisation, and the grant stipulations, the appropriate report should be prepared and sent to the relevant people.
4	– Evaluation meeting	When feasible, the preparatory team should meet once more to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of the event.
5	– Follow-up activities	Many events foresee a series of follow up activities, which could include projects prepared during the course, exchanges of results or establishing a website. See Part 6 on the follow up phase.

Clearly there are a lot of elements to bear in mind, in terms of both human and financial resource management. It is important that the various responsible parties for the event (the organisation, preparatory team and to some extent the expert speakers and participants also) have an overview of the different elements which contribute to a successful event. With this in mind, it is worth pointing out that team flexibility and preparing for the unexpected are as central to the smooth flow of administrative tasks as they are to the socio-educational elements of the event. May our granny be with you!

Suggestions for Reflection

At the beginning of this chapter we said that the tables suggest a sequence of action (mainly administrative) which could help you when preparing a training event. We deliberately choose not to indicate any timing for the different action so now…it is up to you:

– Think of the size, structure, management and traditions of your organisation. With this in mind, try to allocate on this time line the timing you think is more appropriate for the suggested action sequence (one month before, or one month after, etc).

BEFORE

Actions 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 1

Time line

________________________________ event

You can then repeat this diagram for AFTER.

3.4.4 Preparatory team meetings – Why, when, how long?

The possibility of holding one or more team meetings before a training course depends on factors such as financial possibilities or the availability of the team members. Some elements can certainly be discussed and prepared by email, fax or telephone before the beginning of the training course. Nothing however replaces a meeting where all team members meet to share and discuss their ideas and agree upon the basic values, objectives and programme of the training. Especially if all or some team members have not worked together before, a team meeting to prepare the training course is also the first experience in working together and getting to know each other as colleagues.

Ideally, a preparation meeting should take place several months before the course. The exact time depends on what needs to be done. Will the participants be selected at, or after the meeting? Should experts be invited? This needs to be done in due time.

The length needed for the meeting depends on the nature of the course and on how well the team members know each other in advance, but if possible, a meeting should last at least for two days. Besides clarifying the course frame, preparing the program and distributing the tasks, some time should be reserved to build the team and to evaluate the meeting.

Before ending the meeting, make sure to establish a clear division of tasks and set deadlines. Who should do what by when? What can be done by email, what not? Deciding on a co-ordinator for this process between meetings might be useful to ensure that the process is actually followed up until the next meeting.

3.4.5 Participant's profile

Once the aims and the objectives of the training course are set and the preparatory team start to consider the program (3.5), they should also start to discuss the type and range of participants they are targeting.

An agreed and shared participants profile is fundamental. A comprehensive description of the required profile will help organisations to decide who they are going to send to the course, and will also help the planning team to prepare the program and to foresee the active involvement of the participants. Of course, a profile is just that – a profile which real participants step into and make real. It is not a wish-list, and there are often discrepancies between written appearance and lived reality (notoriously with self-assessment of linguistic competencies). That said, using a profile allows training teams to construct a program based on a certain number of assumptions (see the list below), and this program can be adapted and fine-tuned according to the team's assessment of the group and the expectations and feedback which they receive.

A list of elements that could be taken into account when designing an application form is:

- **Age:** Some institutions implement age limits for their grants. In terms of group education, it is also worth considering the age spectrum in relation to your aims, objectives and working methods.
- **Language:** this is a crucial question, especially important if the planning team should also provide interpretation. It is worth indicating not just the working languages, but what level of competency is required to work in the language. Some forms advise, for example, the ability to fully comprehend and complete the form without external assistance. A recurring problem with assessing language skills from application forms is the practice of forms being completed for participants by others in the organisation. If you're reading this, you know who you are.
- **Experience:** this part should indicate the range and depth of experiences that participants are expected to have in relation to the course topic. For example, if it is an advanced course on project management, the form could stipulate that participants should have been responsible for at least three projects. If the course is aimed at beginners, it could look for some previous involvement and evidence of involvement in future projects. This element is often

useful for recognising and incorporating prior learning processes. The planning team could use this information regarding the participants' experience as a starting point for the program, and build participation on their knowledge and evaluation of previous work.

- **Need and motivation:** 3.1 argued that a *needs assessment* is the starting point for shaping training. It follows that participants should really need the training if the overall aims and objectives are to be targeted. Participants may need the training for a specific reason (new responsibilities in their organisation), or for reasons relating to their general development (an advanced training for trainers for example). Questions on the form may ask participants to state why they need the training and why they feel that it will be beneficial. These questions also address motivation, and while it is a difficult task for any team to assess need and motivations on the basis of a limited input, direct questions of this nature can often provide useful insights.
- **Type of organisation:** this should clarify the type of organisation that is being sought; the form could look for information on the background, aims and structures.
- **Position in the organisation:** the position of the participant within their organisation influences their ability to multiply the course results, and often to implement or suggest changes which the training highlights as necessary. This is especially true of international activities.

Once the organisation has received the application forms short-listing can begin. An important operational principle for this process is that selection does not equal judgement. It is not a matter of judging participants' skills or abilities, but a matter of selecting participants with profiles and needs that correspond to the aims and objectives of the program. This is not always possible; the line between selection and various forms of judgement is thin, and there may also be political or organisational reasons suggested for certain inclusions or exclusions. Teams can limit these elements by setting out clear selection guidelines in advance.

3.4.6 Different types of training courses

A basic step in the preparation of a training course is deciding which kind of course to go for (see also *3.2.3*). This choice will clearly influence the educational process hugely, and sometimes the choice is left to the preparatory team. Very often the framework is provided by the organisation or relevant sponsor or institution which have established the type of course they like to run. The list below provides a far from exhaustive account of the main types of training courses you may encounter.

A LONG-TERM course is planned to last over a relatively long period of time, and is composed of different parts. Normally there are two courses, with a fixed period between them, during which time participants should carry out specific tasks while calling on their experiences of the first course. The results are evaluated during the second course.	**Comments:** this kind of framework is often used for long-term training on project management for example. The process of training, implementation and then evaluation has proved to be beneficial for both trainers and trainees in providing a fuller picture of the training loop.

A SHORT-TERM course, for example a study session, is normally a self-contained course of 5 or 7 days.	**Comments:** Very frequently used. Because of the limited time, trainers should resist the temptation to overcharge the program and allocate enough time for the group to form and begin functioning.

In a **TAILOR MADE COURSE** the program and the content are specifically designed to meet the stated needs of participants. There are different ways of structuring it. There may be fixed aims and objectives, and the preparatory team designs the program with the participants on the basis of these. Alternatively, even the aims and objectives could be decided with the participants during a facilitated process. A course of this nature may be used in an advanced training on a specific topic for example, or within an organisation working in an area where members need to identify and train for skill or knowledge gaps.	**Comments:** For trainers and participants this kind of course can be highly challenging and dynamic, and requires not just flexibility but the ability to deliver on a potentially wide range of issues and topics. Central to this framework is the process of identifying and interpreting participant' needs, and choosing the best way to deal with them. If the course is to be co-designed by the participants, then the facilitation of this needs to be carefully thought through, in terms of the participatory nature of the methods chosen and the role of team and participants during the process
A **Module based course** is composed of different modules, that is specific units or self-contained training courses. Modules tend to focus on a topic or issue, and can be progressively linked to each other or offered in isolation.	**Comments:** Quite useful when participants are together long enough to deliver a number of modules (module length is clearly relative), and lends itself to both 'building block' training or addressing a range of unrelated topics.
ON THE JOB TRAINING is a specific training on definite subject relating to the task or job that the trainee should fulfil.	**Comments:** The main advantage is that the content of the training is immediately applied and that the trainer has an immediate feedback from the trainee.
A COMPULSORY TRAINING course has set aims and objectives and is part of a system or framework within an organisation. Participants are encouraged or required to take part in the course in order to gather specific knowledges and skills related to their tasks.	**Comments:** These kinds of courses are common in organisations such as the Guides and Scouts where specific training precedes specific roles or positions. The training system of the organisation is based on its training needs, however attention should be paid to review these needs and to revise the system periodically.
A MIXED DESIGN course gathers together aspects of the courses above, designing a composite course addressing specific needs.	**Comments:** This kind of course is dictated by the context, and attention should be paid to the educational process between elements of the overall course. An example might be a module based course where one module deals with on the job training and other modules are tailor-made.

Suggestions for reflection

Consider the training courses you have been involved in over the past year.

- Which kind of courses were they?
- Were they mentioned in the list?
- If yes, what would you add to the comments above?
- Thinking of the evaluation/results of the course, would you have chosen another type of course? If yes why?
- Are there other courses would you add to the list? How would you describe and evaluate them?

3.4.7 Training Aids

In the section on learning styles (3.2.4), it was emphasised that people learn in different ways, at different speeds, and in relation to different stimuli and the skills that are engaged. As well as reflecting this in the methodological choices of a training course (3.3.2), the physical structuring of sessions and the ways in which material is presented have a significant influence on communication and the facilitation of learning. While it is not worth agonising over a flipchart versus a whiteboard, the choice of training aids needs some consideration.

This choice is based on different elements:

- Number of participants and their background (particularly but not only in an international context)
- Physical environment
- Training approach and strategy
- Subject and content of the session
- Materials available
- Competencies and skills of the trainers

In considering these elements it is worth remembering that training aids are not in themselves methods of training, they remain tools which do not replace the trainer. It is useful to employ a variety of aids, but variety (or technology!) is not an end in itself. It may be flash to set up video-conferencing between different floors of the training centre, but it might be easier to have a good old-fashioned plenary. Relatedly, it is advisable to practice your session to check that the material you are using is really an aid and not a virtuoso showpiece. As 1.2.4 argued, the way we train can relate to our self-image as a trainer, and aids can be an extension of that.

You may find the table below a useful guide:

AIDS	COMMENTS
Visual aids • OHP • Slides • Short clip or film • Pictures • Flipchart • Coloured card • Post-it • Handout • PowerPoint presentation	Make sure that the setting of the room is adequate and that all participants can properly see the point of focus. This involves checking the lighting, in general and for the screen position. It is better to limit your aids to essential details and avoid distractions. Choose an appropriate layout, with an appropriate lettering size. Space letters adequately and prefer taller letters to wide ones. If you choose colours pay attention not to over combine fade colours.
Audio aids • Music • Microphone	Music is often used to relax participants or to help the trainer to create a different atmosphere. Talking in a microphone is not always straightforward, rehearse to find the right distance form the mouth and to avoid feedback.
Physical materials • Balls • Available sports equipment • Materials for role-play, disguises etc • Material to mould and create visually	During the training participants will appreciate physical move ment and energising, whether it is a simple game or a creative exercise with clay or some similar material. Make sure that you have adequate amounts of all materials needed for a particular exercise, and that where relevant the safety and security of the training environment should be considered

Physical setting • Placing the chairs in a **circle** is informal and contributes to an atmosphere of exchange and even intimacy. Everybody can see each other, and there are no preference seats. • Placing the chairs in a **row** so that speakers are in front of participants is useful for visual presentation, as long as everybody can see. As opposed to a circle however, it sets up an obvious power relation. Placing the chairs in a **series of small circles** is useful when you create working groups to carry out small exercises or tasks during the session. The speaker can be accommodated on a raised platform at the most appropriate point in the room.	The physical setting is important for group dynamics and has an impact on the learning process. Participants should be physically at ease, be able to hear and see adequately and there should be enough room for the planned activities. The room should have sufficient air, and attentive participants prosper in regulated temperatures; that is in rooms that are not tropically hot or numbingly cold. Participants and trainers should be informed and aware of the location of fire and emergency exits.

3.4.8 The report – why, by whom and whom for?

After a long and tiring course, the planning team normally has one more task to carry out – writing the report. While the report may often seem like the last stop prior to embracing exhaustion, it is worth asking the weary team why they are writing it in the first place. A report could be written for a variety of uses, and used in different ways, so it is important to know the purpose before writing it. Reports can be produced as souvenirs, as contributions to resource development, to live up to the name and keep a report of an organisation's activities for future reference, to gather dust, as a grant requirement for donors, and so forth.

Equally, reports may be written in a variety of ways. The team may be responsible and plan it as part of the event process, with a reporter nominated for each day or module. Alternatively, with big events or where the emphasis is on producing a publishable resource, an outside rapporteur can be engaged. A common practice is involving participants in the report writing as a way of producing a common resource. This often takes the form of a daily report, which when combined with the written material used during the session provides the basis for the final report. In all of these cases, or when a combination of approaches is used, it is useful if the structure and headlines of the report of the report are decided in advance. With participant reports, providing a report format can allow them to participate in the session while noting down relevant material.

Another pragmatic issue is the timing. The report should be completed for circulation within a reasonable period after the event, or at least that is the hope. Efficient circulation goes down especially well with the donors or institutions that gave the grant, and many impose deadlines for submission anyway. With a resource report, quick provision to former participants builds on the energy generated by the training and allows them to use it in their organisations and multiplying activities. When resource reports are aimed at a wider public than the participant group, it is worth bearing in mind that vignettes and allusions to specific personalities or incidents may be of great nostalgic value, but for those who weren't there it can be, well, irritating. Some reports are written in general form and with a confidential section included at the discretion of the author, the report can then be circulated as appropriate to relevant target groups with or without the confidential section. A resource report can be referenced to where more detailed information on the subject can be found, as well as to related previous reports or relevant documents on the same topic.

Appendix 2 provides a sample outline of three kinds of report: a brief outcome report, a resource report and an evaluation report. Ultimately, the context, organisation and team must decide where the focus lies and the aspects they would like to highlight in the final text.