Photo: Riff Fullan

LEARNING THROUGH

STORYTELLING AND VIDEO

MANUAL FOR TRAINEES

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November 2013

HELVETAS
Swiss Intercooperation

CONTENTS

PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL

Two manuals were developed for a one-week training course focused on storytelling:
• A Manual for Trainers
• A Manual for Trainees

While the manual for trainers includes information on objectives, participants, detailed descriptions of exercises, a workshop agenda and handouts, the manual for trainees is a slimmer version to help participants get started. Right now, you are reading the **Manual for Trainees**.

The training curriculum includes exercises and resources for reflection on the use of storytelling tools and methods to support learning in an organisational setting. You will receive hands-on experience with selected tools and methods in employing storytelling for individual and group knowledge sharing and learning. The aim is to help you discover new ways to support your own and other people's learning experiences, and to do so in ways that are deeper, more meaningful and often easier to share outside the immediate group.

This manual will give you an overview of the different storytelling exercises on a day-by-day basis. Apart from the objective of each day, it contains the names of the exercises that you'll be doing and space for you to take notes. At the end of the training, you may ask your trainer for the manual for trainers, in order to get the detailed description of the exercises. The experience of practising storytelling, together with the manual for trainers, allows you to continue applying storytelling in your work, even as a trainer, if you wish to do so. Keep in mind that the curriculum was not developed with the intention to be used in exactly the same way each time. Trainers are encouraged to adapt the various methods and tools to their own purposes and contexts.

We hope you enjoy using this manual. We would also love to hear your thoughts on how it could be improved. If you have any comments or other thoughts to share about the manual, please send them to the HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Knowledge and Learning team at: KNL@helvetas.org

Happy reading!

DAY 1 – EXPERIENCING STORYTELLING FROM LISTENER AND TELLER POINTS OF VIEW

Day 1 is focused on doing practical storytelling exercises – you will be engaged in various storytelling exercises and together with other participants experience what it feels like to be a storyteller and listener.

My expectations for the day:

SESSION A:
JUMPSTART STORYTELLING

The methodology chosen to open the workshop is called "Jumpstart Storytelling".
It was created by Seth Kahan and serves several purposes. It…

• allows you to share your expectations of the workshop
• provides an opportunity to start immediately in a storytelling mode
• is an 'ice-breaker' and provides the trainer and participants with a chance to get to know each other

How does it work? First, the trainer will give a brief introduction to the workshop and to the Jumpstart Storytelling exercise. This will be followed by two storytelling rounds in groups. Then, you will have a chance to choose which stories touched you the most, and the stories with the highest level of interest for participants will be re-told in plenary.

My notes:

SESSION B:
SECOND STORYTELLING EXERCISE – TO WHOM DOES THIS BELONG?

This exercise gives you a chance to experience storytelling based on different objects.
Hopefully you brought an object with you that is significant in some way, e.g. a souvenir, something that reminds you of a special time or event. Please KEEP IT HIDDEN from other participants and be ready to tell a story about it.

The trainer will explain how it works, but it basically involves each participant telling his/her story, and listening to the others, then re-telling someone else's story.

My notes:

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SESSION C:
BUILDING STORIES AROUND TURNING POINTS

In this exercise, you will explore how using a turning point in a project or program can build a meaningful story. It will follow four basic steps:

1. People tell and record stories in groups of 2-3;
2. Each group chooses one story to shape further;
3. The chosen stories will be told in 3 minutes – not by original teller- in plenary and recorded. Lessons will be drawn after each story is told;
4. We will have a brief discussion at the end about the process, especially around the question: What happened to the content at each stage?

My notes:

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SESSION D:
HOW DOES IT FEEL AND HOW DOES STORYTELLING RELATE TO OUR WORK?

Reflecting on the different storytelling experiences of the day: What was striking? How can you see them applying to the context of your own work (or not)?

My notes:

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My learnings from the day:

DAY 2 – REFLECTING ON STORYTELLING: WHAT IS IT, HOW CAN WE FACILITATE STORYTELLING EXERCISES AND PROCESSES?

Day 2 is focused on building upon the shared knowledge of participants and experiences brought out in the previous day, to get a clearer idea of:

• the key elements of good stories
• how to effectively facilitate good and meaningful storytelling from other people
• how to integrate storytelling approaches in day-to-day work to support greater learning

My expectations for the day:

SESSION A:
WHAT IS STORYTELLING? HOW CAN WE MAKE IT WORK FOR US?

The potential number of topics under the broad heading of 'Learning through storytelling and video' is huge! We could design a year-long course under this topic and still have plenty to talk about at the end. How can we make things manageable in one week, in a way that is most useful for all participants?

Let's look at why this curriculum was initially created: the idea came out of a recognition that those of us involved in international development project and program planning, implementation and follow-up could use additional methods to those that are usually employed to help us and others learn about our experiences and about how we can adapt what we do based on such learning.

Two major challenges are how to support individuals, teams and partners to maximise learning from their respective activities, and how to share such learning beyond those who directly experience it. This storytelling curriculum is aimed at helping us use storytelling approaches to meet these challenges.

You may ask: what is storytelling? There are many different definitions, and as with many such things, spending too much time trying to agree on a definition uses a lot of energy with a limited benefit.

This session will give you a chance to think about what storytelling means for you, how (some) other people think of it, and how you will adapt it to your needs.

My notes:

SESSION B:
DECONSTRUCTING THE STORY: WHAT MAKES UP A (GOOD) STORY? HOW CAN WE ELICIT STORIES FROM OTHERS? WHAT ARE THE DOS AND DON'TS OF FACILITATING STORIES?

In this session, we look a bit at the 'nuts and bolts' of stories, at elements that should always or usually be included, at things that make a difference to how interesting or coherent a story is, and at how we can ask the right questions (and avoid asking the wrong ones!) to encourage people to tell their stories. You'll get some pointers and hands-on practice to improve the questions you ask.

My notes:

SESSION C:
PUTTING STORIES TO WORK AND EXPLORING MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

This session will explore how we can approach using storytelling strategically in development work, i.e. how storytelling can be used to support learning in a development context. Participants will think about when / how much we should think about process and when/how much about output. Also, participants will get more deeply into how a story is told from a particular perspective, and how different perspectives on the same event/situation can tell very different stories. This will help to think about how stories are representations of reality, not necessarily right or wrong, but taking a particular point of view. This can present challenges to effective learning, but approached in the right way, a variety of perspectives can give a much richer and more nuanced view of a particular context that traditional approaches to research, whether they are quantitative or qualitative.

My notes:

SESSION D:
REFLECTION ON THE JOURNEY SO FAR. WHAT CAN WE MEANINGFULLY TAKE AWAY? WHAT MORE DO WE NEED TO KNOW?

This session is meant to help consolidate purposes, approaches, methods, etc. in participant's minds, based on the 1.5 days of the workshop up to now.

My notes:

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My learnings from the day:

DAY 3 – DIGITAL STORYTELLING

Day 3 is focused on gaining a better understanding of what digital storytelling is and how it can be used in development work. Participants practice using the video camera and equipment (microphone, tripod, etc.) and writing a storyboard for a digital story.

My expectations for the day:

SESSION A:
WHAT IS DIGITAL STORYTELLING? HOW WILL WE USE IT?

This session examines what digital storytelling is. It also looks more closely at the different components of digital storytelling, i.e. at video, photo and/or audio.

One definition (of many) is: "One can define digital storytelling as the process by which diverse people share their life story and create imaginings with others. (…) One can think of digital storytelling as the modern extension of the ancient art of storytelling, now interwoven with digitized still and moving images and sound (…) Simply put, digital stories are multimedia movies that combine photographs, videos, animation, sound, music, text, and often a narrative voice." (Wikipedia)

My notes:

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SESSION B:
HANDS-ON WITH THE CAMERA (NAME GAME)

In this exercise participants get practical experience using the camera and microphone.

My notes:

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SESSION C:
STORYBOARDING (COMIC STRIP AND STORYBOARD TECHNIQUE)

Now that participants have practiced using the camera and microphone, they can focus on the content of the digital story. In a first exercise, they practice translating story ideas into component scenes and in a second exercise they learn how to make a storyboard.

My notes:

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SESSION D:
PREPARATION FOR FIELDWORK

This session is dedicated to preparing for the field visit of the next day. This includes:

• learning about the project
• group formation for the field visit and making sure the roles of various participants are well defined
• preparing the equipment
• preparing the storyboard for the digital story that will come out of the visit (including type of questions to ask in potential interviews).

My notes:

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SESSION E:
REMAINING QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

In this session, participants can ask questions of clarification in plenary regarding the field visit and digital story that will result from it. Final thoughts can be shared before the field visit day.

My notes:

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My learnings from the day:

DAY 4 – FIELD VISIT

On day 4 participants visit a project, talk to project staff and partners (including local communities) and capture the raw material for their digital story.

My expectations for the day:

My notes:

My learnings from the day:

DAY 5 – ASSEMBLING AND REFLECTING ON THE OUTPUT(S); CLOSING

This day focuses on assembling the raw material collected on the previous day into a digital story. Besides producing outputs, participants will also have time to collectively reflect on the experience and more generally on learning from storytelling.

My expectations for the day:

This day will be packed with editing, producing various outputs, viewing them, reflecting on the experience and what we take away. The morning will be fully dedicated to editing, the afternoon to viewing, reflection and closing.

SESSION A:
EDITING THE DIGITAL STORIES

Most of the morning will be spent in small groups and will be dedicated to editing each of the stories.

My notes:

SESSION B:
VIEWING THE DIGITAL STORIES AND JOINT REFLECTION

Here participants will have a chance to see the results of all their hard work, and the work of others. You will not only get a chance to reflect on your roles and experiences in relation to your own story, but you will also see and provide feedback on the stories of other groups.

My notes:

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SESSION C:
REFLECTION ON HOW TO USE STORYTELLING AND DIGITAL
STORYTELLING IN THE FUTURE

The purpose of this session is to make the link between the training, the participant's previous experience in storytelling / digital storytelling and their ideas on the future application of storytelling / digital storytelling. The idea is for you to leave the workshop with a clear idea of possibilities to put storytelling to work in your own context.

My notes:

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