The different types of training material

Training materials can be divided in two categories: training manuals and didactic materials. In order to decide what kind of material is needed during training, it is necessary to think about the aim of the material. Possible aims include:

- **To introduce a subject and stimulate the interest of participants**
- **To outline the subject(s) that will be followed during training**
- **To serve as a reference document that can be consulted by participants during and/or after training**
- **To be used by participants for self-study**
- **To illustrate a subject in order to facilitate the learning process**

Be aware that providing training materials to somebody does not make that person automatically an expert on the subject and/or a good trainer.

**Training manuals**

Training manuals are books in which content and/or training methods can be found. Very often, the difference between ‘reference manual’ and ‘training manual’ is not well understood and are confused. In practice reference manuals are given to participants after having attended training. The training manual is the manual trainers use to prepare/facilitate their training.

The table below explains the differences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Reference manual</th>
<th>Training manual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contains</td>
<td>- Detailed, often theoretical, information on the subjects</td>
<td>- Step-by-step instructions on how to organise training sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Mostly written text</td>
<td>- A detailed guide for each session with objectives, presentation techniques,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Quite academic text</td>
<td>activities, questions to ask participants and organisational issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Little or no practical guidance</td>
<td>- Basic theoretical information can be included</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implications for use

User needs to know how to transfer the information into active and participative methods

Needs adaptation to own context (country/culture and type of training)

User might need to search for theoretical background information

Both types of training manuals are indispensable and in order to ensure coherence between training content and methods used in different training sessions, the use of both manuals should be combined.

**Didactic materials**

Besides the use of training and reference manuals it is also recommended to make use of training materials which illustrate the content and can facilitate learning. These materials are used in specific training activities and are referred to as ‘didactic materials’. The following table gives examples of such material with suggestions on how to use them effectively.

| Audio-visual materials such as (short) films and tapes | - Make sure equipment is in working order. Test the equipment before training starts.  
- Make sure the language used in the materials can be understood by participants.  
- Ensure visual and sound quality is good.  
- If you do not have enough time to show the whole film, note the track-time of the part you want to show. |
| --- | --- |
| Power Point Presentations | - Only put key messages in the presentation  
- Do not use too many animations  
- Use easy to read font in accessible colours/contrast e.g. white print on black background.  
- Make sure that the projecting screen is big enough.  
- Adjust the lighting and minimize glare. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool Type</th>
<th>Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Flash cards, case studies, pictures | - Adjust to country and culture in which you work  
  - Make sure the format is big enough so all participants can see it clearly if you use this in front of the group  
  - For group work, make sure there are enough examples for each group |
| Drawings, diagrams               | - Representing key information  
  - Clear to understand, not too abstract                                                                                                           |
| Objects                          | - Can be all sorts of materials from balls to play games with chairs and tables.  
  - Try to use objects which participants themselves have access to so they are able to use them in their own work |
| Flip charts, post its, stickers  | - Displaying notes taken in plenary or group work.  
  - These materials can be quite costly  
  - Remember to use high contrast markers.                                                                                                       |