Setting the Scene

Inclusive teacher training is not only about transferring knowledge from the trainers head into the teachers head, but should be seen more as a partnership between facilitators and participants. This partnership should be based on mutual respect and acceptance and should give the opportunity to the participants to experience success. These three ‘ingredients’ are the key to bringing about improvement.
Creating a friendly atmosphere

From the start of the training, you should provide enough time to “set the scene” and to make participants feel welcome and comfortable. Therefore, make sure you are at the location before participants arrive and make sure the training room is ready.

Create a welcoming training room

Make sure the training room and the tables and chairs are clean and ready to use. Put the tables and chairs in half a circle, so that all participants will be able to see the facilitator and the blackboard / flipcharts if necessary. Make sure everybody can easily enter the training room and that they can easily move around.

Be a facilitator

☐ Act as a resource, not as an expert
☐ Facilitate learning
☐ Create a good atmosphere
☐ Be flexible to adapt to special needs
☐ Encourage learning and participation
☐ Make sure what you say is clear to everybody

The following activities are very important as they are basic inclusive practices teachers will have to use in their own classrooms. By carrying out these activities, you do not only set the scene for your training, but you show them in practice how it works. Later on during training, you will need to refer to these ‘starters’.

Welcome
Welcome all participants and trainers to the training. Since most teacher training occurs after hours and on weekends, acknowledge the effort participants made by coming.

Introduction
Give a short introduction on what is the teacher training about. Without going into too much detail, remind people they are attending training on inclusive education with a focus on children with disabilities and that the aim of the training for teachers is to gain skills and competences in order to respond to the diverse needs of all learners.
Presentation
In order to create a good atmosphere within the group, you should give time to participants to get to know each other and the trainers. You could organise a small activity in which participants are invited to present themselves, or to find out more about their colleagues. At the same time, this activity will show the diversity of the group. Try to do the presentation through an active and participative way, but do take into account cultural habits. Do not force people to do or tell things that would make them uncomfortable. You might find that participants are showing resistance and/or are too shy to participate in the beginning when you use active methods. This is normal as very often they are not used to participating actively in trainings/workshops. Give participants time to get used to this and to gain confidence. After a few sessions you will see that they loosen up, become more active in the sessions, and even enjoy the new techniques.

Expectations and objectives of the training
Ask participants what they expect of this training, and ask them to write their expectations down. Present the training programme and the objectives of the training, and have a look with the participants if the training will respond to their expectations and/or which expectations will not be responded to and why.

Rules during training
Together with the participants, decide on some rules everybody needs to follow during training, in order to make it pleasant for each individual. These rules can be about respect for others' opinions, listen when somebody talks, etc. Display the rules to remind participants.

Sharing responsibilities
At this point you can also appoint certain tasks and responsibilities to people. For example you can make somebody the timekeeper.

Introduce icebreakers / energisers
Icebreakers and energisers are short, active activities in the form of games. Icebreakers are mostly used at the beginning of the training and allow people to get to know each other. Energisers can be used throughout the training, at moments when people are getting sleepy, or as a break between subjects. These small games can also be used as ‘team builders’. Ask participants to lead a short game that they know. This will help you, as trainer, to learn the ‘local’ games and to see participants in action, which can give you an idea of how they work with their pupils.

1 International HIV/Aids Alliance (2003) 100 ways to energise groups: games to use in workshops, meetings and the community. Brighton: International HIV/Aids Alliance. -24p