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## **Training on Learning Material Development at District Level**

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### **Learning and Material Development**

Learning material is one of the main components in a learning process. In most cases, learning materials are developed from the central offices and distributed to schools or adult learning groups in the community. Although these kinds of centrally developed learning materials are nicely produced, sometimes they are less relevant to the learners in different places. It is, therefore, preferable that NFE or development workers at the district level be able to develop additional learning materials, which are more relevant to the situations of the learners in their districts. There are some recommended principles for production of learning materials that NFE workers at district or local level may use as a framework for their training, or for production of the learning materials by themselves. These principles will be described under the topic of material development process.

### **Strengths of Local Learning Materials**

Local learning materials may be developed as an additional part of the learning curriculum (literacy, primary, secondary, or vocational education curriculums). Learning materials may also be developed for a specific learning purpose containing contents relevant to things happening in the community, such as cultural events or festival, frequent infected diseases, environmental contamination, etc. There are some advantageous points concerning the development of learning material at the district level.

- 1) Learning can be more interesting and learners can be motivated learn
- 2) Learning content is more relevant to the needs of the learners or to the local situations
- 3) It enhances literacy skill of the learners.

### **Content of Learning Materials**

Sources of content for developing local learning materials may be varied. The content of the learning materials may be drawn from the existing curriculum or from the problems occurred in the community. Generally, there are three types of learning materials.

- 1) Learning materials developed from the community problems and needs.

- 2) Learning materials developed by modifying or adjusting central curriculum to local conditions.
- 3) Learning materials developed from local wisdom.

The content for developing learning materials at the district or local level is generally known as local curriculum. The content based the local situations is most relevant to the learners. However, there is a limitation that officials at district or local level may not be able to produce learning materials in all issues. They have to select the topics or issues which are most relevant to the community problems and needs.

### **The Format of Learning Materials**

The learning materials may be produced in form of printed materials, folk media, or audio-visuals. For printed materials, learning materials may be in form of information sheet, poster, flip chart, wall newspaper, leaflet, flyers, folders, magazine, board game, booklet, etc. In terms of folk media, learning materials may be in form of song, story telling, drama, role play, puppet, etc. The material format for audio-visual or electronic media may be in form of radio, audio tape, video, TV programme, etc. The format of learning materials chosen for production has to take into account the location of each learning group, equipment and the feasibility of production such material format at the district or local level.

### **Persons Involving in Development of Learning Materials**

To develop learning materials that can be more interesting and relevant to the learners' needs, the material developers should also involve related persons in the process of material development. The persons that should be involved in the material development process are: NFE workers at district level, CLC teachers/facilitators, adult learners, villagers, local resource persons, and development workers at the community level (community development officials, public health workers, school teachers, etc.)

### **Material Development Process**

The development of learning materials at district or local level involves eight main steps. These steps have been tested and have proved to be practically viable in development of learning materials for adults at local level in many countries.

- 1) Needs assessment
- 2) Curricular unit preparation
- 3) Material preparation
- 4) Pre-test
- 5) Revision and finalization
- 6) Duplication
- 7) Application
- 8) Evaluation

### ***1. Needs Assessment***

Based on the adult psychology, adult learners prefer to learn something directly beneficial to them, and relevant to their problems and needs. Needs assessment is, therefore, the starting point for development of learning materials at the district level.

Needs assessment can be done by collecting data concerning living conditions, and problems and needs of the people. The approaches for data collection may be: asking questions, visiting learners' houses, discussing with people individually or in group, joining activities and observing the people and their daily life activities.

Some recommended methods for conducting needs assessment and analysis are:

- the NP (New Participatory) method
- PRA (Participation Rural Appraisal) method
- Problem-tree technique
- Participatory Public forum
- Mind-mapping

The NP method, introduced by ACCU, involves two main steps: making a data map of problems and making a data map of solutions to the priority problems.

The steps for the NP method are as follows.

- 1. Group formation.** All person involved in the survey are formed into group of about 7-10 persons.
- 2. Sharing of observation.** After collecting data, group members present the identified problems one by one.
- 3. Writing on slips.** Each group member writes down crucial problems on slips of paper (one problem on each). The identified problems have to be clear and specific without personal opinion of the data collector.
- 4. Reading and classifying.** Each person takes turn to read what he has written **and classifies** them into categories and pastes on separate sheets of paper.
- 5. Making of cluster and completion of problem map.** Each cluster of problems is circled as "small islands" and then grouped into "big islands." All the "big islands" are put together to make a problem map.
- 6. Prioritization of problems.** Number of the slips is one of the criteria for prioritization.
- 7. Making of solution map.** Use similar process as in step 5.
- 8. Selection of theme.** The learning materials will be developed from the themes selected.

### ***2. Preparation of a Curricular Unit***

Prior to the development learning materials, the NFE workers have to prepare an outline of the materials. The curricular unit is an outline that helps material developers to select, adapt and develop learning materials as planned. The curricular unit comprises the following components.

Theme: What is the material about?

Target learners: Who are the intended learners of the material?

Objectives: What is the material made for? The objectives have to be specific, measurable, achievable/attainable, result-oriented, and time-bound (SMART).

Content: What are to be included in the material?

Format: What kind of material will be used to convey the content?

Teaching-learning process: How the material is going to be used?

Time required: How long will it take in using the material in the learning process?

### ***3. Material Preparation***

Learning materials can be prepared in three ways: **selection** of readily available materials, **adaptation** of materials, and **development** of new materials.

Some other organizations, such as public health office, agricultural office, and community development office normally produce some materials for their own programmes. NFE officials may also collect materials from these organizations for the learning session. The existing materials may also be adapted to suit the target group. The adaptation may be in form of content, picture illustration, level of language, format and size of the materials, or adapt the mode of presentation to other forms. If the NFE workers choose to develop new learning materials, they have to select the format of learning materials. After the format of material has been chosen, the production can begin.

Types of Learning Materials	Presentation Formats
Printed materials	information sheet, poster, flip chart, wall newspaper, leaflet, flyers, folders, magazine, board game, booklet, etc.
Folk media	song, story telling, drama, role play, puppet, etc
Audio-visuals	radio, audio tape, video, TV programme, public loudspeakers, etc.

### ***4. Pre-test***

The purpose of pre-testing is to assess the quality of the learning materials produced in order to further improve the material before finalization and mass production. The pre-testing should be based on the curricular unit, namely objectives, contents, language and text used, visuals, format, teaching-learning process, and other elements, such as title, quality of paper, and durability and portability of the materials.

### ***5. Revision and Finalization***

After the pre-test, the information from the testing will provide the material developers with a clearer idea whether the learning material produced is suitable for use or not. The revise and finalization is to make improvement of the material. Based on the tested data, the material developers can make changes or corrections of the material as needed.

### **6. Duplication**

When the material has been improved, the corrected version can be used for mass production, which may be in form of hand-copy, locally made mimeograph like *toshaban* or photocopier.

In deed, steps 4-5-6 will be required only when the materials will be produced in mass quantify. For using with one particular group of learners, there is no need to follow steps 4-6.

### **7. Application**

Application is the actual utilization of the learning materials in the teaching-learning activities. In the learning process, learning materials may used for several purposes, depending on the characteristics of the materials and the objectives learning materials are utilized.

For creating motivation for learners, the learning materials may be songs, posters, drama, or video, etc. For ensuring learners' participation, the learning materials used may be game, dialogue, role play, drama, etc. For transmission of instruction and knowledge, the materials used may be in form of leaflet, chart, video, etc. For follow-up or reinforce of the literacy skills learned, the learning materials may be booklet, leaflet, wall newspapers, magazine, etc.

In the application stage, besides the material itself, the NFE workers have to learn about the learning styles of adult learners. There are some characteristics of adult learners that they can learn better if:

- respect and recognition is given to their experiences
- learning is related to their daily-life problems
- they are given a chance to think and compare with their own experiences
- they get recognition of their success
- they get support from other adult learners
- they are treated as adult learners, not as children
- they have opportunity to communicate their learning to others, and are actively involved in the learning process
- learning materials are relevant, attractive, and useful.

### **8. Evaluation**

The main purpose of evaluation is to measure whether the learning material produced is able to achieve the objectives set in the curricular unit. The evaluation may be done through post-testing, getting feedback from users, facilitators and learners. It is useful for production of learning materials in subsequent material development. The main areas for evaluation are:

- 1) Achievement of objectives
- 2) Relevance of contents
- 3) Attractiveness of visuals
- 4) Appropriate of language used
- 5) Appropriateness of teaching learning process
- 6) Other aspects (such as format, durability, portability, size, etc.)

### **Things to Be Considered When Preparing Materials**

When an NFE worker at the district or local level plans to develop learning materials, there are something he needs to consider.

Firstly, the **subject of materials** should be according to the learning needs of the learners. Learning can be obtained by discussion with the learners, observation, using NP method or PRA to finding their needs. Secondly, he has to select the **format of materials** appropriate to the learning objective, content to convey, and complexity of the message. Next, he has to consider the **language level** to be used which has to be suitable to the level of literacy of the learners. Finally, he has to determine the **learning objective**, whether the learning material is to be used for creating motivation for learners, to ensure participation, to provide instruction, or to enhance literacy skills and knowledge of the learners.

It should be noted that the learning material developers at the district or local level need to take into account **characteristics of good materials** when producing the materials. These characteristics are:

- 1) Attractiveness of format and presentation
- 2) Relevance of subject to the local conditions
- 3) Usefulness of contents and information
- 4) Appropriateness of language used for the learners

### **Types of Materials That May Be Developed at District Level**

Several things can be used as learning materials, such as simple drawings, newspapers, magazines, clip-art, actual objects, folk stories, songs, performance. Some types of materials may be too complicated to produce, however, there are some kinds of learning materials that can be produced by NFE facilitators at the local level. Learning materials that may be produced by NFE facilitators are such as information sheets, posters, charts, picture cards, wall magazines, leaflets, and booklet.

### **Utilization of Learning Materials in the Teaching-Learning Activities**

In applying the learning materials in the teaching and learning activities, the NFE facilitator may use more than one kinds of learning materials in the learning process. It is found out that using a combination of learning materials in an integrated manner can be more successful. Teaching-learning activities that learning materials may be used are: self-learning, brainstorming, quiz, dialogue, debate, group discussion, field trips, role-playing, simulation games, village mapping, and drawing.

### **Instrument and Types of Data to be Collected**

In conducting a needs assessment of a community, the NFE workers at the district level need to develop a framework for data collection. Specifically, they can develop an instrument for data collection. The instrument should cover such aspects as: physical structure, population, economic, education, social and culture, political and administration, environment, and problems and needs of the people. Followings are recommended aspects to be observed when collecting community data.