

Session 2:

Introductions and Expectations

TIME: 75 MINUTES

ACTIVITIES:

the introductions session is composed of two activities: first is an introductions and expectation exercise of two parts – a participant introduction exercise and presentation of workshop expectations; and second is a facilitator presentation providing an overview of the workshop.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

- to introduce participants to each other and to facilitators;
- to introduce dynamically the idea that the ‘personal’ and ‘professional’ are integral to the lives of women human rights defenders;
- to support a safe space by having each participant share both stories and the physical manifestations of important moments and people in their lives;
- to help facilitators understand the participants’ priorities and their expectations for the workshop; and
- to set out the basic structure of the workshop, including guiding principles, logistics and ground rules.

ADAPTATION NOTES:

This introductions and expectations exercise has been consistently effective and should not require specific adaptation.

Some portions of the overview session could be presented during the opening session.

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EXERCISE

Introductions and Expectations

TIME: 60 MINREQUIRED MATERIALS: ITEMS FROM PAST WORKSHOPS (IF POSSIBLE); AND BLANK CARDS (OPTIONAL).SUMMARY:

This is an exercise to allow participants to introduce themselves in an unusual way – by laying down and describing two items that represent something important in their personal life and something important in their professional (public) life. In addition, they will present their expectations of the workshop after their introductions.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

In the centre of the room, facilitators will have already prepared a focal area where they should set out items from past workshops (in many workshops, we have traditionally used scarves that were given as gifts to the facilitators from each region – this is very beautiful and creates a strong centrepiece – then we have included items from different workshops, such as country postcards and invitations). If a candle has been used to open the workshop, it should be in the middle, with these items surrounding it.

To open the exercise, remind participants that they were asked to bring two objects – one personal and one professional – representing something very important to them.

Ask each participant to lay out their personal and professional items in the centrepiece, with items touching or overlapping (they can do this simultaneously, but in silence).

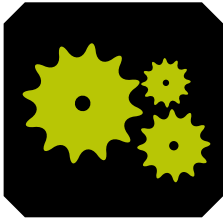
Part one:

Once they have finished laying out their items, go around the circle and ask each participant to introduce themselves (name, country and organisation) – and then ask them to talk briefly about the objects they put down – why did they choose these items? What meaning do they hold in their lives?

Part two:

Once the first round of explanations is completed, ask each participant to say a few words about their expectations of the workshop, specifically highlighting:

- what do I bring to this group?
- what do I want to take away?

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FACILITATION NOTES:

If participants did not manage to bring items, they can:

- choose something they may have with them; or
- they can use a blank card either to draw a symbol or to write down the name of the item they would like to put down.

Reassure participants that they will get their objects back at the end of the workshop – if there are very valuable items, they can take them back at the close of each day, but they should set them down again on the morning of each new day. Alternately, they can lay down the item initially and then replace it with a drawing on a card, leaving it there symbolically.

Each person should be brief, as this is a long exercise – and you can tell them that there will be many opportunities over the three days to say more about themselves and to get to know each other; this is just a beginning.

Allow about 1.5 minutes per person for each ‘round’ of questions. Make sure answers are recorded; these are all important for observations and future evaluations.

Alternative option:

Have individuals quickly think of who in their life they would choose to introduce them. Ask them to take five minutes to think of what that person would say. Then ask them to be that person when they introduce themselves. This is a lighter version of the archetypes exercise (see page 127), but it helps participants to step out of the ‘traditional’ way of introducing themselves.



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FACILITATOR
PRESENTATION

Workshop Overview

TIME: 15 MIN

REQUIRED MATERIALS: NONE

SUMMARY:

The workshop overview provides background on the integrated security workshops. It provides a brief description of the workshop agenda and logistics and concludes with 'brainstorming' of basic workshop ground rules.

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

In this space, we are here to talk about *you*. Your lives, your concerns. We will focus on understanding the threats you face and develop your strategies to stay safe and well – both the ones you already employ, and new ones from around the world.

We will talk in various ways, through group work, exercises, plenary discussions, presentations.

We will introduce some new ideas that are specific to your security – ones that we have developed with Front Line, the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation and Urgent Action Fund – and published in two books: *Insiste, Persiste, Resiste, Existe* and *What's the Point of Revolution if We Can't Dance?*.

We have developed and tested these ideas in a series of almost 30 workshops all over the world, with more than 300 women human rights defenders, men human rights defenders and international human rights groups/donors from over 50 countries.

We will incorporate exercises and ideas from several sources, including Front Line's *Protection Manual for Human Rights Defenders*, Marina Bernal's *Self-Care and Self-Defense Manual for Feminist Activists* manual, and the Capacitar International Inc. toolkits.

Our aim is to create a safe space here, where we can develop and share strategies, and focus on all aspects of

your lives, how they are interconnected and very relevant to your security.

Agenda and logistics:

Suggested timings: we will be together for three days, starting at 09.00 and ending at 17.00. Coffee breaks in the morning and afternoon, and lunch at 13:00.

Basic agenda: explain the general agenda for the workshop; put it on a flipchart for easy reference.

Logistics point person: single out whoever will handle participant questions on accommodation, transport, finance, medical emergencies, etc.

Creating ground rules:

Although the group should engage in brainstorming on a set of agreed ground rules, the following list sets out some of the basics that should be included:

Don't sit on your needs! Make it clear that participants should feel free to ask for breaks, and that they should sit comfortably – flag the fact there blankets, cushions and water are available.

Anonymity, confidentiality and trust: everything we say in this space is done so under conditions of anonymity. We will be supporting each other in this space and developing a relationship with and trust in each other. There will be

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Workshop Overview

times when what we say must be in confidence, and cannot be shared outside of the workshop.

Deep respect: a big part of creating and holding a safe place together is really demonstrating our respect and care for one another. This means taking the time to listen deeply to each other, without interruption (*so please keep mobile telephones turned off, do not use your computer to take notes, do not speak when someone else is talking, do not interrupt another participant – whatever is culturally appropriate/specific*).

Responsibility: facilitators are charged with helping to create this space. As participants, you are responsible for yourselves, for each other, for holding this space together and keeping it safe – for sharing and learning together. It is critical to emphasise that at the core of the workshop is shared learning – facilitators are not teachers, they are guides – and the success of the workshop depends on the group.

Step Up, Step Back: responsibility also means knowing your particular style – whether you tend to be quiet and hold back, or whether you tend to talk openly and jump into conversations. Be aware of that style and sometimes do the opposite!

Stay positive and open to possibilities: please remain open to possibilities and be particularly respectful of other participants when they are exploring them with you.

A final note on mobile telephones: ground rules on these devices can be the most challenging for participants (particularly for those from activist cultures where they play such a vital role). According to one facilitator, one method of achieving observance of these ground rules is to ‘give each other the gift of their full and intentional presence in this space’. If a reminder is needed, try asking everyone to pretend that they are on an aeroplane, and to switch all telephones off. A more extreme alternative is to collect all mobile telephones during workshop sessions and place them in a nearby room.

FACILITATION NOTES:

The ground rules can be written on a flipchart. Alternately, they can be written on separate pieces of paper and posted around the room, or laid down in the middle circle of the room to serve as reminders of the commitment.