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Vocational Training - Lessons learned

The recent Proposal writing workshop offered the opportunity to capture lessons learned to enhance implementation of the AIP Vocational Training workshops. Under each topic, we indicate possible action points.

Topics covered

1. **Participant Selection**
2. **Training Approach, Materials and Schedule**
3. **Branding and Banner etc..**
4. **Workshop Logistics**

Venue

Snacks and Meals

Accommodation and Per diem

Travel and Hotel.

Per diems and expenses.

Currency of choice.

5. **Instructor orientation**

1. **Participant Selection.** The initial discussions with AIP partners were the workshop should be aimed at younger mid-level participants. The first workshop had some members who were perhaps too senior and thus less open to the teaching methods and the content. Also there was a noted absence of women participants.

Participant Selection Action Points.

1. At time of participant selection, Vocational Training Workgroup members to emphasize the desired participant profile:
 - a. typically those who are young and enthusiastic and how have an expected opportunity to apply the workshop material, and
 - b. consider a gender element.
2. **Training Approach, Materials and Schedule.** Part of the Vocational Training goal is to expose participants to participatory teaching methods that are proven to be more effective in facilitating participant learning. Since some participants may be unfamiliar with this approach, it is important to be clear from the beginning about the intentional decision toward interactivity.

Training Action Points

1. If a participatory workshop is planned then
 - a. explain at the beginning of the workshop why it is being done, namely: opportunities for networking, to share ideas, to have ideas critiqued, to participate in discussions and that it is a more effective way for people to learn.
 - b. Advise participants if there will be small group discussions to share ideas within the smaller group and then back with the larger group.
 - c. Add “networking, sharing ideas, discussion and critique” as workshop objectives.
2. Copy edit all handouts by at least two or three people before being finalized.
3. Schedule
 - a. Build in flexibility (i.e., don't have the workshop too tightly scheduled)



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- b. Allow enough time at lunch for prayer (allow 1.5 hours for lunch and state it as lunch and prayer break).
 - c. Build in exercises to the workshops session. Don't expect participants to do any "homework" during the evening of a workshop.
 - 4. Where possible, consider a pre- and post-test,
 - 5. Include a workshop evaluation covering 1) content (quality of material), 2) relevance of material to the participants work and 3) quality of instruction.
- 3. Branding and Banner etc..** Each workshop must have a banner, with the correct logo (see below) on all documents and presentation slides, a packet with handouts, a tablet of paper, a pen, and a bottle of water at each station.

Branding header
As a single bar



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As individual logos (needs a white background)



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Below the header, you can use the institutional logos e.g.,



(smaller than the USAID logo)

4. Workshop Logistics

Logistics contact. Ensure someone is clearly identified and engaged in arrangements well before the workshop. This person handles logistic arrangements, payments for participants, the room, the tea, the lunches, and the expenses of traveling companions, getting receipts, setting up rooms, etc.. **Interact with the NARC and CIMMYT events coordinator** for enhanced coordination.

Venue. Workshops need a venue that is international standard in terms of layout, quality of room, furniture, noise levels and reliability of power.

Snacks and Meals. Tea breaks, water and food are important in determining success.

Accommodation and per diem for participants.

Travel and Hotel. If participants travel from outside Islamabad and Rawalpindi, then they receive travel reimbursement (based on receipts).



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Per diems and expenses. To the extent possible, limit the role of the speaker in providing logistics support and allow them to focus on the content. Follow AIP allowance standards.

Currency of choice. Use local currency for per diems and costs as it is often difficult for participants to accept US dollars.

Logistics Action Points.

1. **Logistics contact**
 - a. Each workshop needs a specific contact person who can assist with the venue and logistic details – starting well in advance of the workshop.
 - b. Identify and meet the key representatives of NARC and CIMMYT and establish expectations of support (e.g., Dr. M. Ehsan Akhtar, Chief Science Officer and Registrar at NARC / PIASA)
2. **Venue**
 - a. For all venues, see how logistical and functional challenges can be reduced. Need to assess the venue in advance in terms of:
 - comfortable chairs, presentation and the sound system, computer projector, easel sheets with markers,
 - water in the room, and
 - computer placed where the speaker doesn't need to worry about it.
 - b. If PIASA is used, then engage Dr. M. Ehsan Akhtar (Registrar of PIASA - Pakistan Institute of Advanced Studies in Agriculture and responsible for PIASA location).
3. **Snacks and meals**
 - a. Tea break –if possible set up in the workshop room. Sometimes consider having tea in place while people continue working.
 - b. Provide lunch and where possible provide water in the workshop room
4. **Per diem and payment standards**
 - a. Clarify with CIMMYT to ensure consistency of per diem (how much and what days covered) across all AIP activities. Present understanding is participants receive \$25 per full day of the workshop.
Need to clarify what happens on travel days.
 - b. If participants arrive the evening before and leave the day after the workshop, then they receive accommodation for those nights plus the night(s) during the workshop.
 - c. Check room rate for rental.
 - d. **Currency of choice.** Pay local costs in local currency.
5. **Instructor Orientation.** For instructors who come from other countries they may benefit from some pre-arrival orientation information.

Instructor Orientation Action Points

1. **Workshop speaker preparation.** Inform instructors that scheduling and logistics will likely be very different to their home country arrangements. Workshop speakers will likely need to be **flexible** and be ready to change their presentation on the run as needed.
2. **Pakistan guide for visiting Instructors**
 - a. In-country - include notes on security, where safe to travel, etc.
 - b. Air travel – Note hotel options in Dubai, airline options (alternate travel routes to Pakistan, etc.).