

COADY INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE



EXPERIENTIAL EXERCISES FOR RESOURCE CENTRES TRAINING

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2006

RESOURCE CENTRES EXPERIENTIAL TRAINING EXERCISES

These exercises are based in a three week educational program offered at the Coady International Institute. The exercises are published in the hope that wider distribution of this training will advance the abilities of information resource centres to fulfill their vision and the visions of their organizations.

This collection is a work in progress, and additional exercises will be filled in as time permits, eventually creating a full manual.

It is assumed that the trainer has facilitation skills and also significant information services training or education. Although facilitators have many individual styles, these sessions work best using participatory methodology, as the learning takes place using stories, role plays, drawings, exercises and group work.

It is also assumed that trainees will not have any prior training in information services although they may have experience working in an information resource centre.

We have tried to make the exercises generic so they can be used with participants who have an interest in any field of information. If all participants come from one particular subject area, such as adult learning, the examples and handouts may be tailored by the facilitator to fit that specific sectoral interest. However, the exercises can also be used for participants with disparate sectoral interests in the same training period.

Negotiating content with participants prior to the delivery of the workshop is highly recommended. For example, the sessions using computers for database design and the use of the internet tend to be very popular but may not be appropriate if computers or internet access will not be available to participants in their resource centres.

Each session is numbered and the materials are designated as Posters/Overheads, Handouts or Worksheets. Posters/Overheads may be copied onto a flip chart for demonstration or copied onto a transparency for projection.

We hope you find these exercises useful, and welcome your comments.

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1



TIME
1 1/2 hours



MATERIALS
Coloured pens or pencils
Paper

ENVISIONING THE RESOURCE CENTRE

OBJECTIVE

- To explore the participants' visions for their resource centres

METHOD

This session begins with a guided meditation, followed by a drawing exercise. Participants then share their drawings and discuss common features and differences in relation to their resource centres' contexts.

STEP 1:

Explain that participants will be going on a mental journey to their own "ideal" resource centre, the one they would like to create after completing the workshop

Encourage participants to get comfortable, relax and perhaps close their eyes

STEP 2:

In a calm, gentle voice, ask participants to imagine they are standing outside their resource centre. Wait a moment to give people time to situate themselves

Suggest that they think of where they are (pause for a moment)

- ◆ What do they see?
(pause)

- ◆ What do they hear?
(pause)
- ◆ What do they smell?
(pause)

Now imagine walking slowly into their resource centre. Suggest that

they take their time and move slowly around the centre, using all their senses.

- ◆ What do they see? (pause)
- ◆ What do they hear? (pause)
- ◆ What do they smell? (pause)
- ◆ How do they feel?

Give participants time to enjoy the vision of their ideal resource centre. When they begin to show signs of restlessness, suggest that everyone return to the present.

STEP 3:

Quietly distribute drawing materials and ask participants to express their vision on paper.

Explain that they do not need to be artists or architects: the drawings can be as realistic or as symbolic as they like.

STEP 4:

When participants have finished their drawings, invite them to share their visions with others in the group by describing what they have drawn. Post the drawings in a central location in the room.

Encourage each participant to explain the context of their centre. For example,

- ◆ where is it situated geographically
- ◆ how did it come to be
- ◆ who uses the centre, and so on

STEP 5:

When everyone who wishes to share their drawing has done so, facilitate a discussion of common features and differences among the resource centre visions, relating these to the context of the resource centres.

Conclude by pointing out that people may envision a wide variety of different models for resource centres. A framework for analysing these different models will be introduced in the next session.



2



TIME
1 1/2 hours



MATERIALS
Participants' Drawings of Resource Centres
Poster/Overhead 2-A – Spectrum of Models
Handout 2-A – Conceptual Framework for Resource Centres
Poster/Overhead 2-B – Elements of Resource Centres
Handout 2-B – Elements of Resource Centres

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESOURCE CENTRES

OBJECTIVES

- To discuss different models for resource centres
- To explore the inter-related elements of a successful resource centre

METHOD

This session uses participants' drawings of their "ideal" resource centres to stimulate discussion of different resource centre models, and terminology to describe them. A conceptual framework for elements of a resource centre is introduced.

STEP 1:

Refer to the earlier drawings and discussion of participants' visions of resource centres. Often a wide range of models of resource centres will be represented, from some that resemble traditional libraries to others that seem more like community activity centres or training centres.

STEP 2:

Display Poster/Overhead 2-A, and distribute Handout 2-A.

Library

Standardized

Documentation
Centre

Specialized

Resource
Centre

Energized

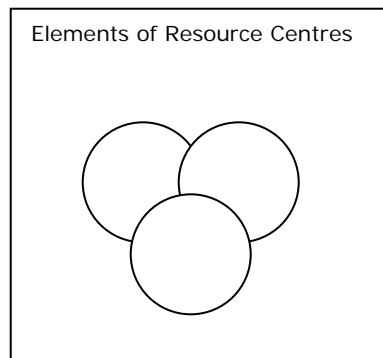
Discuss the spectrum of terms proposed to describe different types of resource centres (see Handout 2-A).

STEP 3:

Ask participants to form groups of 3 or 4, and to discuss among themselves which model each of their resource centre "visions" most closely resembles, and why.

STEP 4:

Reconvene the large group, display Poster/Overhead 2-B, and distribute Handout 2-B.



Describe the concept of the three related elements Matter, Form and Energy

- Matter is the "stuff" of the resource centre, both the information resources and the infrastructure
- Form is the way the Matter is organized
- Energy is the "atmosphere" of the centre, both the ambiance and the activities that go on there

These elements interact with each other, and may have both internal and external dimensions. For example, information resources may be generated internally or obtained from external sources, or both. The classification

system may be a standardized (external) one, or a system developed internally.

Ask the participants to identify aspects of their drawings that represent each of the elements (for example, computers, videos, tables would be Matter; the shape of the centre, organization or placement of items within the centre would be Form; people using the centre in particular ways might illustrate Energy. There will be some overlap of categories)

Note the aspects identified by the participants on the appropriate part of Poster/Overhead 2-B. Participants can do the same on their Handouts 2-B, if they wish.

STEP 5:

Note that in order for a resource centre to be truly effective, all three elements must be in balance.

- A resource centre that has excellent Matter and impeccable Form but lacks Energy may be sterile or uninviting. Ask participants if any of them have experienced resource centres of this sort. Give time for one or two stories.
- A resource centre that has excellent Matter and Energy but lacks Form may be chaotic and inefficient. Again ask if participants can share stories of this sort of resource centre.
- A resource centre that has Energy and Form, but little in the way of Matter may be frustrating for users. Give time for one or two more stories.

Note that this framework will be used again during the workshop, both as a guide in the planning process for resource centres and to analyse resource centres that are visited on field trips.

Conclude by suggesting that the participants' drawings remain posted throughout the whole workshop, to keep their visions always central to their thinking as the program progresses. They can add to them or change them at any time as new ideas emerge.

A Spectrum of Models



Library

Documentation
Centre

Resource
Centre

Standardized

Specialized

Energized

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESOURCE CENTRES

Resource centres are tremendously diverse in size, shape, activity and focus, and have grown up in a wide range of contexts around the world. In many countries, community resource centres emerged to further the efforts of extension agents or literacy workers. These resource centres usually focus on the grassroots communities they served. Many NGOs have developed internal resource centres in an attempt to organize a growing collection of documentation and literature on their areas of sectoral interest. Some resource centres support a specialized research community, while others may act in an education and advocacy role for particular groups such as indigenous peoples or refugees.

Resource centres may be "stand-alone" organizations in their own right, or operate as units or elements of a larger organization. Some resource centres may look a lot like libraries, while other resource centres have a library within them. The term is used in a wide variety of ways.

Whatever their form, however, resource centres are usually established with a particular vision in mind. The goal may be rather practical and short-term: sometimes, for example, the motivation for establishing a resource centre is simply to tidy up a very unruly mess of documentation. On the other hand, some organizations see resource centres as an integral contributor to social transformation.

Resource centres are catalysts for change that can become decisive in increasing the capacity of communities and nations ... They are centres of excellence which record, remember and learn from past experience, and turn this experience into lessons for the future. They tap pools of data and information and channel them into streams of knowledge flowing where they are most needed...

Resource centres are also centres of commitment. They encourage policy makers and organizations ... to address the critical problems, to make a real difference to people and communities who lack basic necessities. They have a sense of solidarity with such communities.

McIntyre, 2000

The vision for your own resource centre will depend on the circumstances, focus and level of your organization. It should be developed in a strategic way, within the context of the organization's overall vision, mission and goals, with those who will support the centre and those who will use it.

A SPECTRUM OF MODELS

Library	Documentation Centre	Resource Centre
<i>Standardized</i>	<i>Specialized</i>	<i>Energized</i>

A **library** may be described as a place where information resources are collected, organized, and made available to users. Libraries tend to collect material that is produced outside the organization or institution that houses the library. Libraries are often quite formal, and follow nationally or internationally standardized ways of organizing materials.

A **documentation centre** functions in a similar way to a library, but often also collects (and sometimes produces) documentation on the activities of the organization or institution where it is located. Documentation centres often have a sectoral focus: for example, you may find "Agricultural Documentation Centres" or "Co-operative Documentation Centres", which try to collect all relevant information produced by and about that sector.

A **resource centre** performs many of the same functions as libraries and documentation centres, but usually has a strong community focus. In addition to producing, collecting, organizing and distributing information in a number of formats, a resource centre may serve as a meeting place, a communications centre, a venue for workshops, a referral centre or direct service provider, an advocacy centre, and sometimes a cultural museum.

Because a resource centre revolves around the characteristics of the community it serves, there is often less emphasis on standardization. Whereas libraries are supposed to be "neutral" in terms of the information they provide, resource centres often gather material to be used in advocacy.

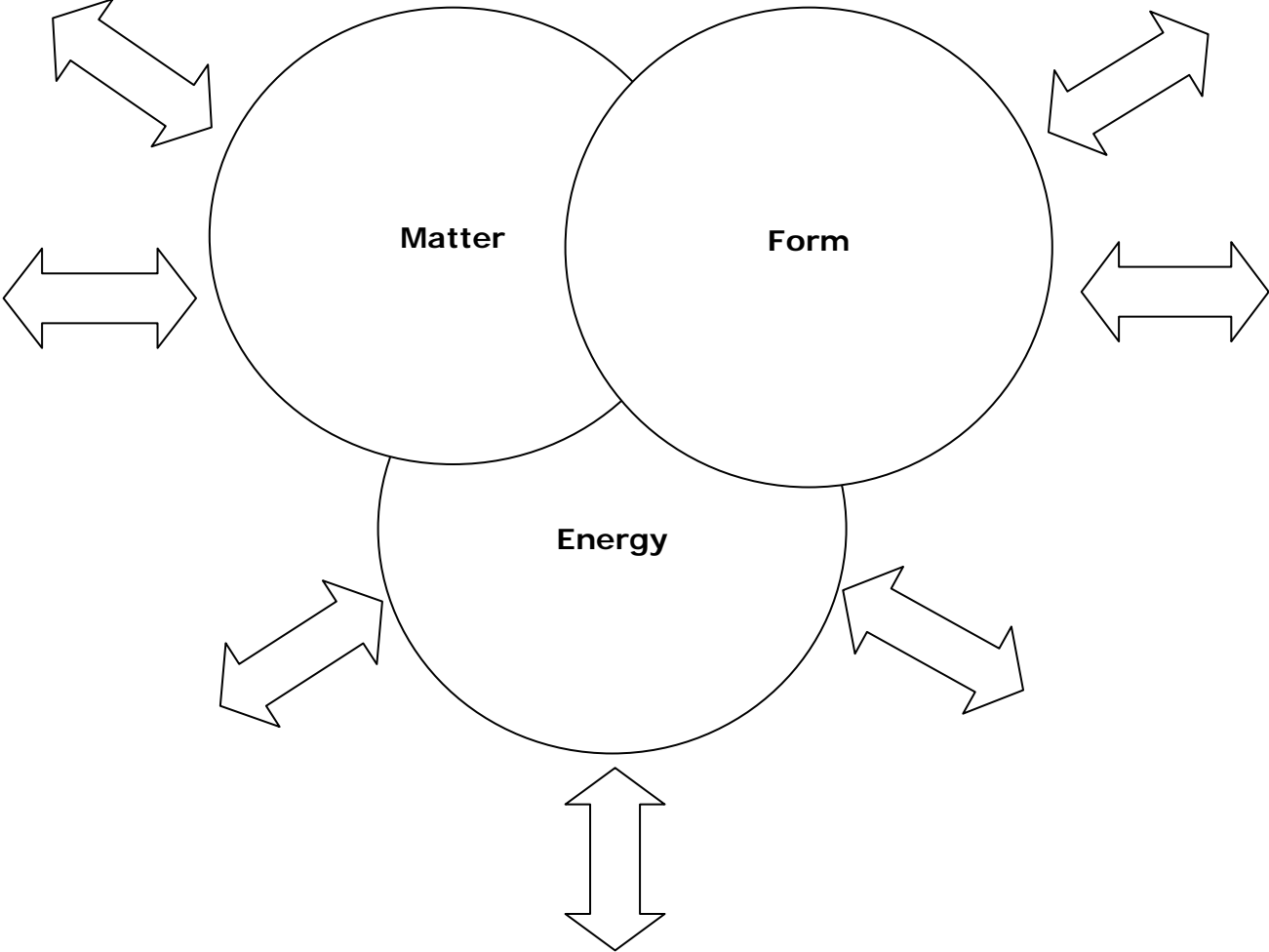
Resource centres may also be actively involved in the generation of information, by fostering participatory research in the community. Ideally, resource centres also have the capability to help with the analysis of information for the users, and may serve as a bridge to the wider national, regional or global community.

Not everyone uses these terms in exactly the same way. Also, there is a lot of overlap among these categories.

If your organization has a resource centre, where do you think it fits on the spectrum? Why?

If your organization is planning a resource centre, which model do you think most closely corresponds with the goals of your organization? Why?

Elements of Resource Centres





5



TIME
3 hours



MATERIALS
Computer(s) with Internet access
Worksheet 5-A – Critiquing
Websites
Poster/Overhead 5-A – Do's and
Don'ts

WEBSITE DESIGN

OBJECTIVES

- To browse and critique existing websites
- To create critical awareness of navigational, design, aesthetic and content components of websites.
- To introduce the features and building blocks of a good website
- To create awareness of features that make a website difficult or unfriendly to use
- To produce a list of do's and don'ts that apply to building a website

METHOD

This session begins with an exercise in critiquing websites. It is recommended that the websites used for the exercise are those of the participants' organizations, if possible. Use at least 10 sites for the exercise.

STEP 1:


Explain that participants will be taking a look at selected websites to make some general observations, including the **do's** and **don'ts** that apply to building a website.

Break participants into pairs or small groups, explain that the worksheet (Worksheet 5-A) includes various criteria by which you can evaluate websites.


Explain that it is not always immediately obvious why we prefer some sites to others, but by taking the time to understand what makes a website “work” for us, we can begin to establish some best practice rules for creating really effective websites.

Ask that participants try to assign a site score for each question:

**** - excellent**

 - **good**

 - **not good**

 - **useless**

STEP 2:

Ask participants to share their observations on the sites and compare notes.

STEP 3:

Conclude by asking for a list of Do’s and Don’t for building a good website (Poster/Overhead 5-A).

Adapted from The I-Train Collective Web Site Creation Training Course: Instructor’s and Student Manuals (August 1999).

Critiquing Websites

Worksheet 5-A

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How navigable is the site?										
Is it easy to find the information you are after, given the various signposts on the home page?										
Is it easy to find your way back to the home page or other main section pages from the site's "interior"?										
Are the navigation graphics self-explanatory?										
Do you have to click through too many pages to get to your destination site?										

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How readable is the information on the site?										
You've found the section of the site with the relevant information for your needs – is it easy to read?										
Are there clear headings on the page?										
Is the size and colour of the text easy on your eyes?										
Do the graphics on the page complement or detract from the text content?										

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Is the site aesthetically pleasing?										
Do the colours of the site design work well together?										
Is there a continuity of style between the graphics?										
Is the spatial arrangement of text and graphics complementary, incidental or irritating?										
Is the design of the site in										

tune with the subject matter/organization?											
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How informative is the site?										
Does the information on the site stick to overviews and links to other resources, or are there opportunities to access in depth resources?										
Are there opportunities to interact with the site and ask for additional information (e.g. "contact us" buttons, etc.)?										
Are the search pages, discussion forums, guest books and other special features clearly explained and easy to use?										
Are the list of contacts, resources and links annotated with useful descriptions, explanations and advice?										

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How long does it take to get the page loaded onto the screen?										
Are there large graphics that slow down the delivery of text onto the site?										
Are there text alternatives to the graphics to read while waiting for the graphics?										
Does the length of the page force you to wait a long time before you can read what is at the bottom of it?										

Adapted from The I-Train Collective Web Site Creation Training Course: Instructor's and Student Manuals (August 1999).

Do's	Don'ts



7



TIME

Each part of the session is 1 1/2 hours

Full session is 3 hours



MATERIALS

Part 1

Blank sheet of flipchart paper

Markers

2" x 8" coloured cards or papers

Poster/Overhead 7-A - Typical Cataloguing Fields

OPTION 1

Printed commercial catalogues of various sorts - 1 catalogue for every 2-3 participants. Depending on their availability and relevance in your country or region, the following sorts of print catalogues may be interesting: garden supplies, tools, fair trade goods, gifts, clothing, electronics, etc.

DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUING

OBJECTIVES

- To introduce the concept of descriptive cataloguing
- To identify typical elements of a descriptive cataloguing record
- To provide hands-on practice in descriptive cataloguing

METHOD

The first part of the session is an exercise using daily objects to demystify the process of descriptive cataloguing. Two options are provided for conducting this part of the session. The second part of the session uses typical resource centre materials to give participants the opportunity to construct their own descriptive cataloguing records, and compare their records with other participants' records.

Part 1

OPTION 1

STEP 1:

Ask participants to form pairs or groups of 3, depending on numbers. Ask each group to select one catalogue from those available.

STEP 2:

Allow a few minutes for participants to browse their catalogue. Then suggest they select one or two items and look closely at the catalogue entries for those items to see exactly how they are described.

MATERIALS (CONTINUED)

OPTION 2

Typical items found in a household or office - 1 item for every 2-3 participants. Items may be such things as a stapler, a key, a child's toy, a comb, a pencil, a packet of soap, and so on. It is helpful if at least some of the items have a brand name, a manufacturer's name and/or country of manufacture indicated.

Part 2

Selection of books, pamphlets, kits, audio-visual material - at least 1 item for every participant
Poster/Overhead 7-A - Typical Cataloguing Fields
5" x 8" cards - one for each participant
One 5" x 8" card for each item, filled out with correct descriptive cataloguing information.

STEP 3:

Ask participants to list the different types of information found in the entries they have selected (for example, name of the item, size, price, colour, etc.)

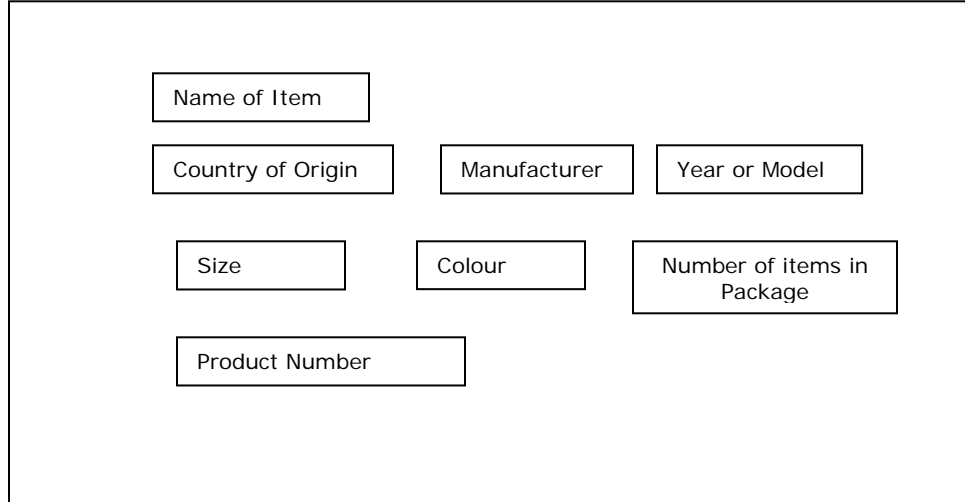
STEP 4:

Ask each group to read out loud one of the entries they selected, and name the types of information they identified. Print each new type of information on a 2" x 8" coloured card or paper.

STEP 5:

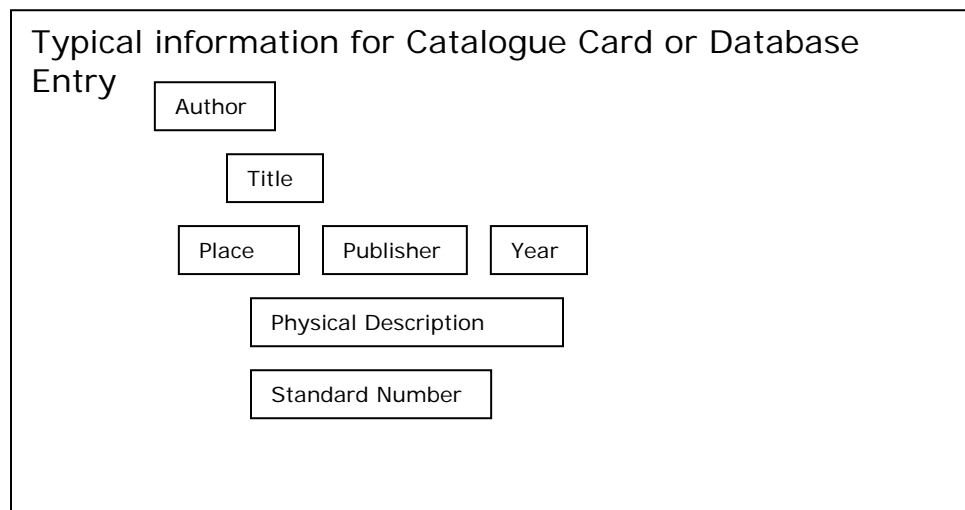
Attach all the coloured cards to a horizontal sheet of flipchart paper, placing them in areas analogous to a typical catalogue card.

Example:



STEP 6:

Explain that in cataloguing material in a resource centre, similar categories of information are recorded in order to produce a catalogue entry that describes the material in detail. Display Poster/Overhead 7-A and draw comparisons with the categories produced by the participants



Conclude by noting that participants will have the opportunity to practice this skill with typical resource centre materials in the next part of the session.

Part 1

OPTION 2

STEP 1:

Ask participants to form pairs or groups of 3, depending on numbers. Ask each group to choose one item from the selection available.

STEP 2:

Allow a few minutes for participants to look carefully at their item. Then ask them to write a description of it, giving as much detail as possible.

STEP 3:

Ask each group to read out their description. Print each significant term on a 2" x 8" coloured card and post on a horizontal flipchart.

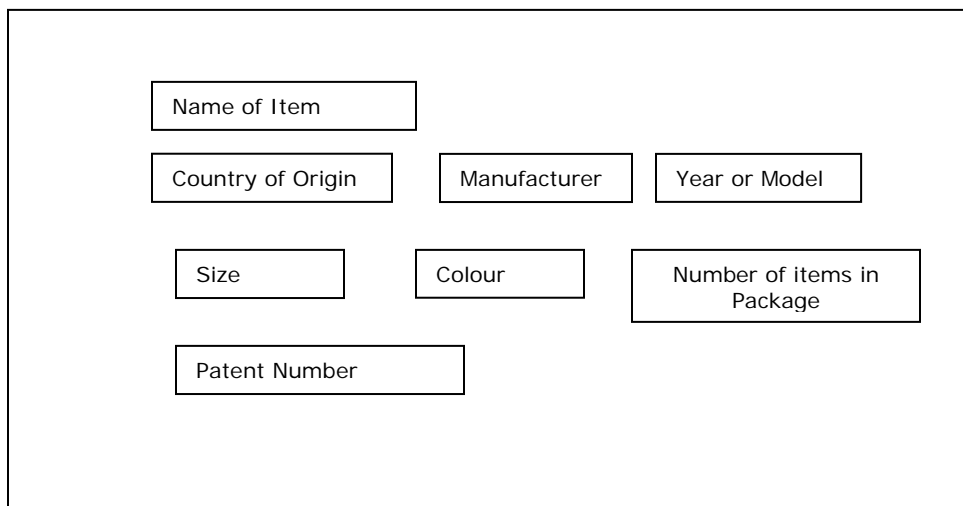
STEP 4:

Ask the participants to organize the descriptive information in categories (for example, several groups may have named colours, sizes or trademarks of the items).

STEP 5:

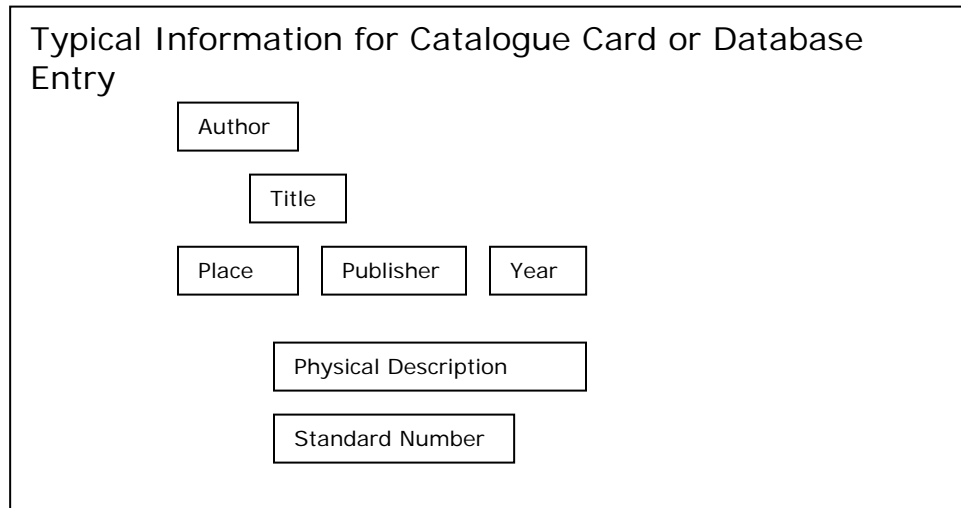
Group the coloured cards according to the categories named, placing them in areas analogous to a typical catalogue card.

Example:



STEP 6:

Explain that in cataloguing material in a resource centre, similar categories of information are recorded in order to produce a catalogue entry that describes the material in detail. Display Poster/Overhead 7-A and draw comparisons with the categories produced by the participants.



Conclude by noting that participants will have the opportunity to practice this skill with typical resource centre materials in the next part of the session.

Part 2

STEP 1:

Display the samples of resource centre materials and invite the participants to select one item each.

STEP 2:

Ask participants to pair up with someone who has an item in a different medium (e.g. a book person with a kit person, a video person with a pamphlet person). Distribute two blank 5" x 8" cards to each pair.

STEP 3:

Describe the categories of information outlined on Poster/Overhead 7-A. Explain details the participants may not be familiar with, such as order of author names, copyright date versus printing date, and so on.

STEP 4:

Demonstrate filling in sample fields on Poster/Overhead 7-A for an item (It may be easiest to choose a book)

STEP 5:

Ask the participants to work with their partner to describe each of the items they have selected on a card, using the descriptive cataloguing categories from the poster/overhead. Circulate among the groups to assist as necessary.

STEP 6:

When the groups have finished describing their items, ask each group to exchange materials with the group beside them. Distribute 2 new blank 5" x 8" cards to each group. Repeat the process of descriptive cataloguing. Each group will now have filled in cards for 4 items.

STEP 7:

Combine the groups that have worked on the same items. Encourage them to compare their entries and come to consensus on areas that differ. Ask them to note on a separate sheet any questions that arise or difficulties they encounter.

STEP 8:

Distribute to each group the "correct" descriptive cataloguing entry for each item. Encourage them to note any differences from their entry.

STEP 9:

Bring the large group together and debrief the descriptive cataloguing process.

- ◆ What did they find most interesting?
- ◆ What did they find most challenging?

- ◆ What skills will they need to work on to become efficient and effective cataloguers? Why are these skills important?

Conclude by explaining that becoming a skilled cataloguer takes a great deal of experience, and often considerable training. It is often helpful, if circumstances permit, to have a second person check over cataloguing entries to pick up typos and other small errors.

As long as the basic principles are understood, practice will help. You may wish to arrange opportunities for extra practice throughout the workshop period, depending on participants' interest.

Typical Information for Catalogue Card or Database Entry

Author		
Title		
Place	Publisher	Year
Physical Description		
Standard Number		
<hr/>		
Abstract	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">These elements will be introduced in a later session</div>	
Subject Headings		
Classification Number		



9



TIME
3 hours



MATERIALS

Paper
Pens or pencils
Poster/Overhead 9-A – Types of materials suited for a DBMS
Poster/Overhead 9-B – Numeric vs Non-Numeric
Poster/Overhead 9-C – Things a DBMS should do
Poster/Overhead 9-D – Spreadsheets vs Databases
Poster/Overhead 9-E – Parts of a DMBS
Handout 9-A – Phases of database development
Worksheet 9-A – Questions for requirement phase
Worksheet 9-B – Creation of database records
Worksheet 9-C – Database design

INTRODUCTION TO DATABASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (DBMS)

OBJECTIVES

- To introduce participants to the basic principles of database management systems.
- To introduce participants to the design and technicalities of developing and maintaining databases
- To focus on the use of databases for use as cataloguing systems for materials found in resource centres.
- To involve participants in designing a database management system.

METHOD

This session begins with an overview of database management systems, including questions and discussion regarding appropriateness, and exercises in design and creation. It includes some graphics for overhead projection.

STEP 1:

Explain the difference between a database and a database management system:

A **database** is a collection of data, organized for retrieval. Ask for or provide some examples of collections of data which could be called a database, such as:

- ◆ filing system
- ◆ rolodex
- ◆ shoebox with individual cards for data

A **database management system (DBMS)** is the software product, which manages a database. Provide some examples of DBMS, such as:

- ◆ Microsoft Access
- ◆ CDS/ISIS

STEP 2:

Explain that many types of materials are suitable for entering in a database system.

Ask participants to name the kinds of materials found in resource centres that might benefit from being entered in a DBMS. Add all suggestions to a flip chart. Discuss the appropriateness of their choices.

Complete the list with the following suggestions (Poster/Overhead 9-A).

◆ photographs	◆ books
◆ maps	◆ software collection
◆ slide collection	◆ cassette/DVD/CDROM collection
◆ newspaper clippings	◆ membership file
◆ clubs/organizations	◆ audio-video materials
◆ electronic data files	◆ bibliographies

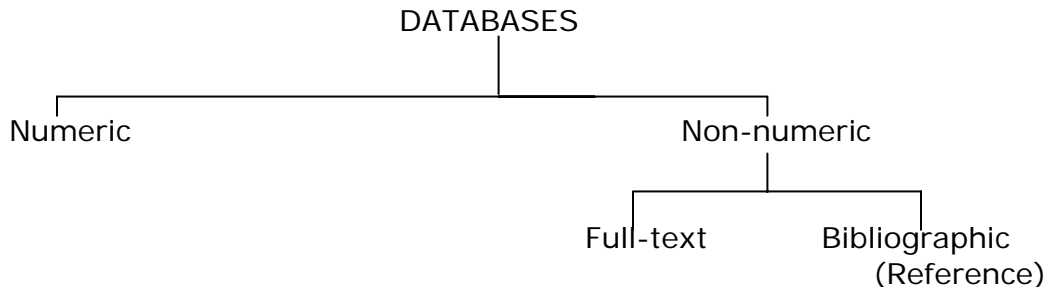
Ask participants to suggest reasons for having these materials listed in a DBMS and display these suggestions on the flip chart.

Reasons which may be mentioned are that organized collections of data can be used for:

- ◆ answering questions (i.e. do you have any information on women in the fisheries?)
- ◆ identifying resources (i.e. do we have any videos on AIDS/HIV in Africa)
- ◆ locating resources (i.e. what's the classification number for books on nutrition?)

STEP 3:

Show the following (Poster/Overhead 9-B) by displaying on a blackboard, overhead or flip chart and discuss:



STEP 4:

Explain (Poster/Overhead 9-C) that at the most basic level, the software application (DBMS) should include the ability to:

1. add, modify or delete data

Databases organize information into files, so you can have several files, such as a book file, an article file, a user file and a vendor file.

2. ask questions about the data

Databases can also organize information on a particular subject for retrieval. Data can be retrieved through asking questions of the data (also called querying or searching the database).

3. produce reports about selections of the data

Reports can be generated based on the data in the database, such as a list of the videos in the collection.

STEP 5:

Explain when to use a spreadsheet and when to use a database for particular information (Poster/Overhead 9-D).

Use a database if...

- the information is a large amount that would become unmanageable in spreadsheet form
- you want to maintain records for ongoing use
- you want to generate reports based on the information

Use a spreadsheet if...

- you want to crunch numbers and perform calculations
- you want to track a simple list of data
- you want to easily create charts and graphs of your data
- you want to create "What-if" scenarios

When considering whether to use a spreadsheet or a database for information, consider that as a general rule of thumb:

Databases should be used for data storage and spreadsheets should be used to analyze data.

STEP 6:

Explain that the decision to use a database for a particular collection, should follow some standard steps and suggest the following procedure:

- A. Requirements Phase (Determining Needs)
- B. Design Phase
- C. Manual Phase

Divide participants into small groups and give them a handout of Step A (Handout 9-A). Ask them to imagine a collection in a resource centre that could benefit from being entered into a database. Have them answer the questions in Step A (Worksheet 9-A), and report their findings back to the group.

A. Requirements Phase (Determining Needs)

What are the objectives of your database? To determine these objectives, you will want to answer questions such as:

- ◆ Who are the users of the database?
- ◆ What is the primary function of the database?
- ◆ What information could be contained in the database to support those functions?

- ◆ How should the information be standardized?
- ◆ What access points are needed for retrieval?
- ◆ What kinds of products (i.e. reports) should the system generate?
- ◆ When does the database need to be ready?
- ◆ Where will the database reside?
- ◆ Who will have access to the database?
- ◆ Will the database be available locally, over a local network and/or remotely – distributed?

STEP 7:

Explain Step B as follows

B. Design Phase

Explain that the design stage usually comprises some/all of the following steps, depending on the DMBS used. All DMBS will require, as a minimum step #1:

1. design the database
2. design the data entry forms
3. design the queries
4. design the reports

Show the following graphic by displaying it on a blackboard, overhead (Poster/Overhead 9-E) or flip chart and discuss:

All databases contain these parts:

Files (books, articles, names of users, etc.) contain...



Records (individual books, articles, etc.) contain...



Fields (author, title, date, etc.) contain a...



Data Element (i.e. 1995)

STEP 8:

Explain Step C as follows:

C. Manual Phase

Both a maintainer's guide and a user's guide are required for the database. These will include a guide to entering data into the database, searching the database and should also include specific information on backup procedures.

STEP 9:

Ask participants the following additional questions:

- What happens when the database is down for hardware, software or connectivity problems? Do you have a contingency plan?
- What kinds of substitutes for the database might be possible?

STEP 10:

Talk about the downside of database management systems:

- can be difficult to learn
- difficult to make structural changes (i.e. deleting/changing field names) once queries, forms and reports are developed
- continuity in personnel can be a problem – information is not passed on
- backups are critical and may require additional expertise
- data may not convert from one DBMS to another

STEP 11:

Divide the group into pairs to complete the following worksheets (Worksheet 9-B). Ask them to fill in data for record #3 and record #4 on this sheet

Fields	Author	Title	Place/Publisher	Year	Physical Description	Abstract	Keywords	Classification No.
Record #1	Freire, Paulo	Education for critical consciousness	London:Sheed and Ward	1974	164 p.		Educational sociology. Liberty	LC 191
Record #2	Coady, Moses	Masters of their own destiny	New York:Harper	1939	170 p.		Adult Education	HD 3450

STEP 12:

Discuss the following database design worksheet (Worksheet 9C).

Divide the group into pairs and have them complete the worksheet, asking them to think about a bibliographic database of books, with a minimum of 5 fields.

Database Design Worksheet

Field	Data Label	Description	Data Req'd?	Data Type	Length/Field Size	Data Repeat?	Validated?	Indexed? How?	Sorted? How?
			Yes No	AlphaNum Numeric	Fixed Variable	Yes/No	No Rules Authority List Thesaurus	None Primary Key Keyword Phrase Phrase/Keyword	None Letter-by-letter Word-by-word Numerical Dates Ignore leading article Stop Word

STEP 13:

Introduce the participants to the basics of DBMS, by having them create a small database of 10 or so records. These could be the records already created in the Cataloguing and Classification sessions.

Focus on the database creation, data entry, searching, sorting and printing by exploring two database management systems, – hands-on if possible. Microsoft Access and CDS/ISIS for Windows (UNESCO) are two DBMS which could be used and some details for each of these are:

Microsoft Access

Microsoft Access runs on: Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows ME, Windows NT, Windows 2000, Windows XP

Microsoft Access is considered an entry-level database that offers a flexible environment for database developers and users. It makes use of the familiar Microsoft Office interface. As part of the *Microsoft Office* suite, Microsoft Access is often easily

available to NGOs. It is not specifically designed for the kinds of information we often deal with, in that each field must have a unique name, so for instance, we cannot have two author fields. There is also no provision for sub-fields as there is in *CDS/ISIS*.

***CDS/ISIS* (UNESCO)**

<http://www.unesco.org/webworld/isis/isis.htm>

CDS/ISIS runs on Windows 3.1x or Windows 95/98/Me, Windows NT or Windows 2000, Windows XP, Unix and MS-DOS.

Micro CDS/ISIS is an advanced non-numerical information storage and retrieval software developed by UNESCO since 1985 to satisfy the need expressed by many institutions, especially in developing countries, to be able to streamline their information processing activities by using modern (and relatively inexpensive) technologies. The software was originally based on the Mainframe version of CDS/ISIS, started in the late '60s, thus taking advantage of several years of experience acquired in database management software development.

CDS/ISIS was created as multi-lingual software, providing integrated facilities for the development of local linguistic versions. Thus, although UNESCO distributes only the English, French and Spanish versions of the package, user-developed versions exist in virtually all languages, including special versions which UNESCO helped in developing, for Arabic, Chinese and Korean.

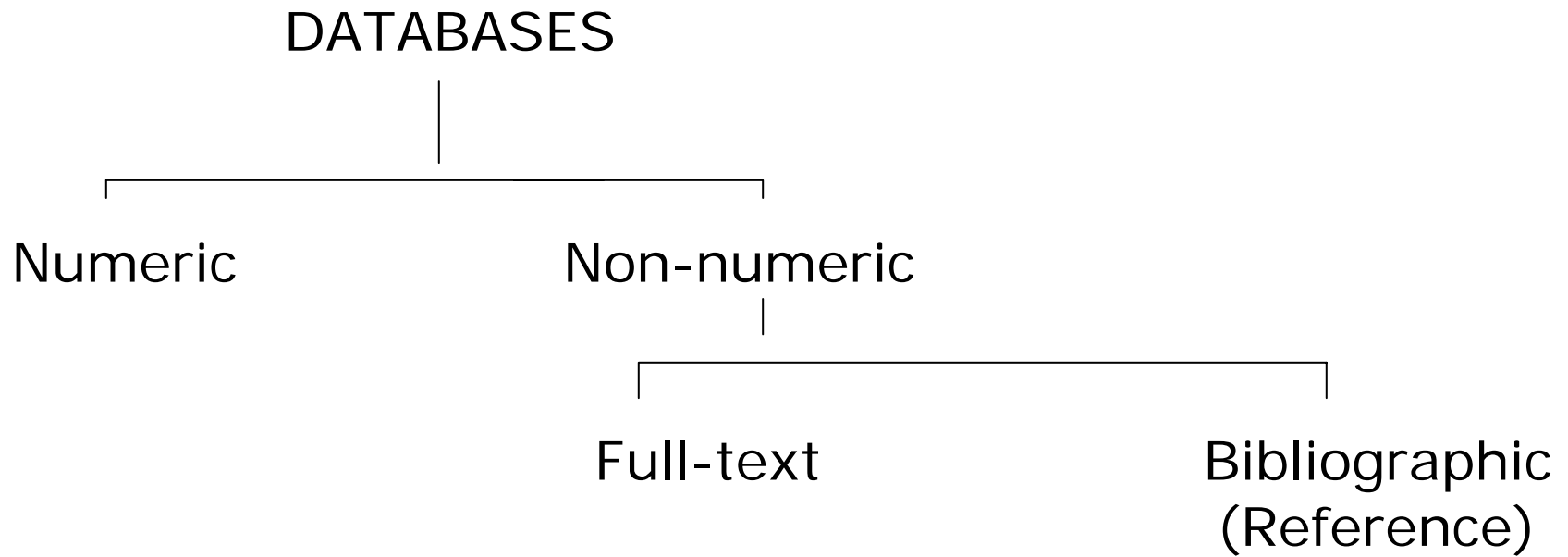
Conclude by asking participants to discuss the pros/cons of the database management systems used and how they might use a DBMS in their information centres.

TYPES OF MATERIAL PARTICULARLY SUITED TO DATABASES

◆	◆
◆	◆
◆	◆
◆	◆
◆	◆
◆	◆
◆	◆
◆	◆
◆	◆

The software application (DBMS) should include the ability to:

- add, modify or delete data
- ask questions about the data
- produce reports about selections of the data



Use a database if...

- the information is a large amount that would become unmanageable in spreadsheet form
- you want to maintain records for ongoing use
- you want to generate reports based on the information

Use a spreadsheet if...

- you want to crunch numbers and perform calculations
- you want to track a simple list of data
- you want to easily create charts and graphs of your data
- you want to create "What-if" scenarios

All databases contain these parts:

Files (books, articles, names of users, etc.) contain...



Records (individual books, articles, etc.) contain...



Fields (author, title, date, etc.) contain a...



Data Element (e.g. 1995)

A. Requirements Phase (Determining Needs)

What are the objectives of your database? To determine these objectives, you will want to answer questions such as:

- ◆ Who are the users of the database?
- ◆ What is the primary function of the database?
- ◆ What information could be contained in the database to support those functions?
- ◆ How should the information be standardized?
- ◆ What access points are needed for retrieval?
- ◆ What kinds of products (i.e. reports) should the system generate?
- ◆ When does the database need to be ready?
- ◆ Where will the database reside?
- ◆ Who will have access to the database?
- ◆ Will the database be available locally, over a local network and/or remotely – distributed?

B. Design Phase

Explain that the design stage usually comprises some/all of the following steps, depending on the DMBS used. All DMBS will require, as a minimum step #1:

- ◆ design the database
- ◆ design the data entry forms
- ◆ design the queries
- ◆ design the reports

C. Manual Phase

Both a maintainer's guide and a user's guide are required for the database. These will include a guide to entering data into the database, searching the database and should also include specific information on backup procedures.

Worksheet 9-A

- ◆ Who are the users of the database?

- ◆ What is the primary function of the database?

- ◆ What information could be contained in the database to support those functions?

- ◆ How should the information be standardized?

- ◆ What access points are needed for retrieval?

- ◆ What kinds of products (i.e. reports) should the system generate?

- ◆ When does the database need to be ready?

- ◆ Where will the database reside?

- ◆ Who will have access to the database?

- ◆ Will the database be available locally, over a local network and/or remotely – distributed?

Worksheet 9-B

Creation of Database Records

Fields	Author	Title	Place/Publisher	Year	Physical Description	Abstract	Keywords	Classification No.
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Database Design Worksheet

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14



TIME
3 hours



MATERIALS

Poster/Overhead 14-A - Network Types
Poster/Overhead 14-B - Successful Networks
Handout 14-A - Networking Exercise
Handout 14-B - Network Structures

Coloured paper shapes prepared in advance

- ◆ strips, approximately 1" x 12" - Colour 1
- ◆ circles, approximately 4" diameter - Colour 2
- ◆ triangles, approximately 3" each side - Colour 3
- ◆ squares, approximately 2" each side - Colour 4

NETWORKING

OBJECTIVES

- To introduce the concept of networking and different types of networks
- To share information about networks the participants belong to
- To analyse the structure of networks, their strengths and challenges
- To consider issues of power and control, transparency and legitimacy in networks

METHOD

This session begins with a brief presentation on networks, followed by information sharing among participants and a network mapping exercise.

STEP 1:

Introduce the topic of networking by noting that all of us are engaged in a number of networks, whether we identify them as such or not. Many of these networks are very informal.

STEP 2:

Present one definition of networks, for example:

A network is any arrangement or any structure that links a group of individuals or organizations who have agreed to work together and/or share resources. Networks may be highly structured or informal in nature.

Ask participants to think of a network they or their organization belong to. Encourage several participants to describe their networks briefly to the group.

STEP 3:

Display Poster/Overhead 14-A - Network Types

Describe the characteristics of the types of networks illustrated on the poster.

Display Poster/Overhead 14-B - Successful Networks

Discuss characteristics of successful networks in terms of legitimacy, equity, and transparency.

STEP 4:

Ask participants to divide into three or four groups.

Explain the exercise as follows:

- ◆ Within each group, please discuss your own networks in greater depth. Which type of network is each?
- ◆ Then select one of the networks represented by a group member for a modeling exercise. You will be presenting your model to other groups, so you should select a presenter.
- ◆ On the floor, you will place the shapes of coloured paper in relation to each other to illustrate how information flows between and among members of the network. Members may be individuals or organizations, depending on the network.
- ◆ Quickly demonstrate a simple example of the modelling process on a flipchart or blackboard, using the shapes as follows.
 - Use the circles to represent members receiving information.
 - Use triangles to represent members sending information, and the direction in which it is moving.
 - Use the long strips of paper to represent the information's path between members.
 - Use the squares to represent members who have decision-making power in the network.
 - If a member is a receiver, a sender and a decision-maker, you can place the shapes on top of one another to illustrate this.
- ◆ Distribute Handout 14-A - Networking Exercise to each group.
- ◆ Allow approximately half an hour for the mapping exercise and discussion within the group.

STEP 6:

Organize a ten-minute "visit" to each of the networks mapped on the floor. Each group should present its model briefly, then answer questions from the visiting groups about the network's structure, how it meets the characteristics of successful networks, direction of information flow, who the decision-makers are, how power relationships are played out within the network, etc.

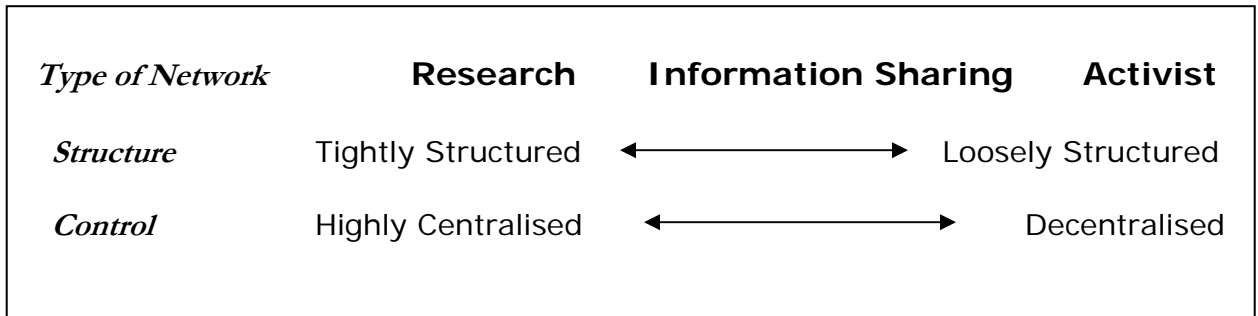
STEP 7:

Reconvene the large group and distribute Handout 14-B – Networks. Explain that these "model" network structures are simplifications.

Ask participants to try to identify which "model" is closest to each of their mapped networks, and discuss the potential advantages and disadvantages of each structure.

Conclude by suggesting that participants can use the analysis of network types, structures and characteristics for success to analyse information sharing networks their resource centre participates in, or to help shape networks they may want to initiate.

Network Types



Characteristics of Successful Networks

A successful network usually meets these conditions

- **There is an agreement to work toward common widely shared problem or agreed goals within certain defined limits. This is the factor most commonly identified as a key to network viability.**
- **There is a realistic strategy for working together. Networks benefit from clear objectives and a strategy which is appropriate to achieving the objectives.**
- **Members have the capacity to contribute financial resources, time or information, in complementary ways.**
- **Skills are developed. This may be through collective training, information sharing or informal mentoring within the network.**
- **The collaboration is "balanced" and "authentic". There is transparency and equity in participation.**

Networking Exercise

- ◆ In your group, select a timekeeper and a "presenter"

- ◆ Map out your network using the coloured paper shapes provided
This part of the exercise should take 30-35 minutes

- ◆ Present your network model to the "visiting groups" (10 minutes)

Questions to keep in mind during your discussion and presentation

- ◆ how does the network share resources?
- ◆ are power issues involved?
- ◆ is legitimacy of the network an issue?
- ◆ how are transparency and equity maintained?

NETWORKS

A network is any arrangement or any structure that links a group of individuals or organizations who have agreed to work together and/or share resources. Networks may be highly structured or informal in nature.

A network usually has these basic characteristics:

- The members are located in different places
- The members have ways to organize and transmit information and data.
- There is two-way communication and transfer of information among members

A successful network usually meets these conditions

- There is an agreement to work toward common widely shared problem or agreed goals within certain defined limits. This is the factor most commonly identified as a key to network viability.
- There is a realistic strategy for working together. Networks benefit from clear objectives and a strategy which is appropriate to achieving the objectives.
- Members have the capacity to contribute financial resources, time or information, in complementary ways.
- Skills are developed. This may be through collective training, information sharing or informal mentoring within the network.
- The collaboration is "balanced" and "authentic". There is transparency and equity in participation.

Research Networks involve collaboration to generate new knowledge. The members may work independently and then pool their research findings to create another layer of knowledge, or they may come together to work on a specific research project.

Information networks share resources to meet the information needs of current and potential users of information, from the local to the national, regional or global levels. Nelson & Farrington (1994: 3) define this as a "collaborative process of information exchange, around a central theme, carried out by actively interested parties". The goal of a formal information network is usually to identify and establish ways to improve the flow of information among members and member institutions.

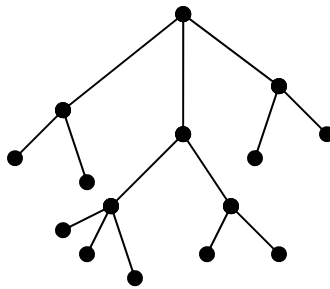
Activist and Strategic Networks are advocacy organizations, with members grouping together for mutual support, information exchange, and to actively pursue changes in policy or practice. Methods may include direct action, lobbying, petitions, information sessions, and publication.

<i>Type of Network</i>	Research	Information Sharing	Activist
<i>Structure</i>	Tightly Structured	←————→	Loosely Structured
<i>Control</i>	Highly Centralised	←————→	Decentralised

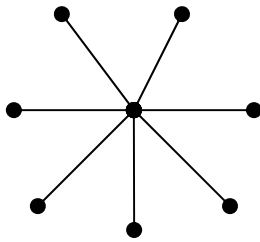
(adapted from Nelson & Farrington, 1994: 23)

NETWORK STRUCTURES

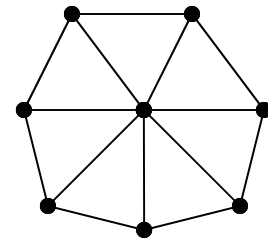
Directed, Hierarchical Model



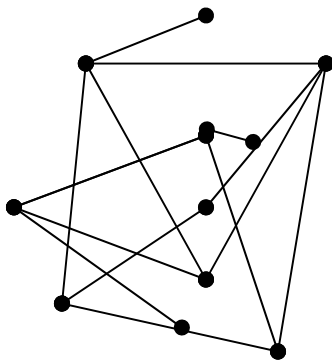
Hub and Spoke Model



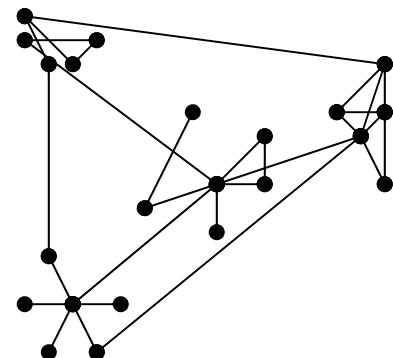
Rim-Effect Model



Non-Directed, Decentralised Model



Devolved Secretariat Model





15



TIME
3 hours



MATERIALS

Poster/Overhead 15-A – PIME cycle
Poster/Overhead 15-B – Logical
Frame or Results Based
Management Frame
Poster/Overhead 15-C –
Outputs/Outcomes/Impacts
Poster/Overhead 15-D –
Conventional vs Participating M&E
Handout 15A – 24 Indicators
Handout 15-B – Case Study
Worksheet 15A –
Outputs/Outcomes/Impacts

**MONITORING AND
EVALUATION**

OBJECTIVES

- To discuss the purpose and value of evaluation in the context of resource centres
- To distinguish between outputs, outcomes and impacts
- To examine ways of measuring the achievement of objectives
- To propose and practice participatory evaluation methods

METHOD

This session alternates between short presentations by the facilitator and break-outs for the participants including the examination of a case study.

STEP 1:

Review the place and purpose of monitoring and evaluation in the PIME cycle (Poster/Overhead 15-A). Remind participants that there must be a clearly defined decision-making purpose for the evaluation and that it must be determined who will make the decision once the evaluation is completed. It may be an individual or a group who makes the decision but it should be specified.

Explain the questions that need to be asked for a monitoring and evaluation process:

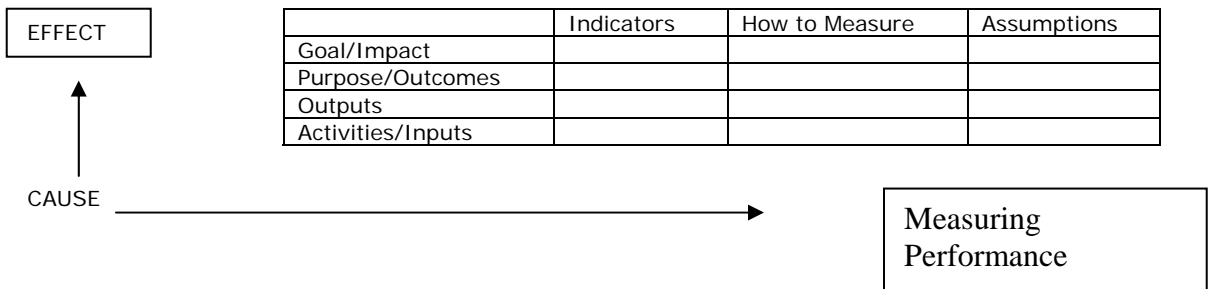
- Who needs the information?
- What information is needed?
- Why (what is the decision making purpose of the evaluation)?

These questions must be answered so that decisions can be made about:

- How to do the evaluation?
- Who should do the evaluation?
- When?
- Where?

STEP 2:

Show the following Logical Frame or Results Based Management table (Poster/Overhead 15-B). Using an example of a resource centre within a larger organization (e.g. YMCA), a goal (e.g. the empowerment of children), an indicator (e.g. children trained in vocational skills), a measurement tool and an assumption, complete the matrix with input from the participants.



STEP 3:

Explain the 24 indicators identified for a rural information support system by Correa et. Al. (1997) and the separation of these indicators into outputs, outcomes and impacts.

STEP 4:

Option #1

Distribute Handout 15-A. Using one of the participant’s resource centres as an example ask the participants to discover the indicators and have one of the participants list them on Poster/Overhead 15-C.

Option #2

Participants are separated into groups and given a case study (Handout 15-B) of a resource centre. Using Handout 15-A as a guide they discover the

indicators and list them, separating them into output, outcome and impact indicators (Worksheet 15-A). Groups report back to the plenary for discussion.

STEP 5:

Describe the differences between conventional and participatory monitoring and evaluation methods using the following matrix from Coupal (2001).

Some Differences		
	Coventional M&E	Participatory M&E
Who Initiates?	The donor	The donor + project stakeholders
Purpose	Donor Accountability	Capacity-building, increase ownership over results, multi-stakeholder accountability
Who Evaluates?	External evaluator	Project stakeholders assisted by a PM&E Facilitator
TOR	Designed by Donor with limited input from project	Designed by project stakeholders
Methods	Survey, Questionnaire, Semi-structured Interviewing, Focus Groups	Range of methods such as Participatory Learning and Action, Appreciative Inquiry, Testimonials
Outcome	Final report circulated in-house	Better understanding of local realities, stakeholders involved in decision-making around analysis and what to do with information to adjust project strategies and activities to better meet results

Show Poster/Overhead 15-D and ask participants to complete the matrix

STEP 6:

Ask participants to contribute their experiences of evaluation and using a flip chart put these experiences under either the conventional or the participatory column.

STEP 7:

Finally participants are divided into two groups. Ask them to discuss two questions:

1. who needs the information gathered in monitoring and evaluation?
2. what information should be gathered in the monitoring and evaluation process?

One group answers these questions for a resource centre and the other group answers for the certificate program. Each group presents their reports.

STEP 8:

To conclude participants design a participatory evaluation technique to evaluate the training program for resource centres.

Logical Frame or Results Based Management Frame

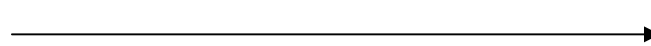


EFFECT

	Indicators	How to Measure	Assumptions
Goal/Impact			
Purpose/Outcomes			
Outputs			
Activities/Inputs			



CAUSE



Measuring Performance

Poster/Overhead 15C (Option #1)
or Worksheet 15A (Option #2)

Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts

Poster/Overhead 15-D

	Conventional M & E	Participatory M & E
Who initiates?		
Purpose?		
Who evaluates?		
Who designs?		
Methods?		
Outcome?		

INDICATORS

Correa et al. (1997) identify 24 indicators they use to measure whether a rural information support system is meeting community expectations of its performance and impact. They suggest these indicators may be modified for application in other contexts.

A. Indicators of Information Availability

1. Accessibility
2. Volume
3. Subject range
4. Diversity of formats (print, audio-cassette, video, poster, slide, electronic)
5. Indigenous knowledge and local information (proportion of local knowledge in information available; recording of indigenous knowledge; general of local knowledge)
6. External information sources (formal and informal, local and outside, personal contacts, etc.)

B. Indicators of Use

7. Visits
8. Membership
9. Consultations
10. Loans
11. Activities

C. Indication of User Satisfaction

12. User needs
13. Community needs

D. Indicators of Local Control over Information Flow

14. Localization of management
15. Finance

E. Indicators of Economic and Social Impact

16. New skills (eg. New agricultural techniques, new business skills)
17. Income generation (leading to higher standards of living)
18. Health and nutrition

F. Indicators of Knowledge Base

19. Awareness of national issues and infrastructure
20. Literacy
21. Examination pass rate
22. Indigenous knowledge

G. Indicators of Participation in Government and its Programs

23. Participation in government
24. Participation in extension programmes

These indicators are measured using a variety of data, which the authors specify. As one progresses from the “output” indicators (Indicators of Information Availability and Use) through the “outcome” indicators (Indicators of User Satisfaction and Local Control over Information Flows) to the “impact” indicators (Indicators of Economic and Social Impact, Knowledge Base, and Participation in Government) it becomes increasingly difficult to demonstrate causal relationships. Nevertheless, Correa et al. (1997) have provided suggested measures and data collection mechanisms which support these indicators.

Interest in measuring the impact of information on development has been demonstrated over the last decade, but has yielded relatively few concrete results. Correa et al., while not producing the definitive set of indicators for all situations, have made a helpful step forward in this area.

Other publications take different approaches to the topic of monitoring and evaluation, many focusing on activities, outputs and outcomes. Healthlink Worldwide's Resource Centre Manual provides a useful set of evaluation questions in Section 9.