

# GUIDELINES: TIPS FOR WORKSHOP ORGANIZATION

Here are some tips we have learned through CAP's workshops.

## ORGANIZATION

### Group Size: 20 – 25

If the group is much larger than this a lot of time is spent in organization and logistics.

### Number and Length of Sessions: Five three hour sessions

In CAP workshops, the first session usually focuses on orientation and trustbuilding. The second and third sessions are devoted to individual work and the fourth and fifth sessions are needed for community research and group analysis of issues. Most sessions run 2 – 3 hours.

### Age of Participants: Usually 12 years and older

We have conducted sessions with young children and strongly recommend this. With adjustments most techniques can be done with any age. Of course, each age group provides different types of information so it is good to hear from smaller voices as well as adolescents. Teens are often willing to assist in these workshops.

### Workshop Environment: Just about anywhere

Young people will adjust to most situations. Privacy and noise are the main concerns. Like anyone, young people become self-conscious if they are being observed. For discussions, it is best to have a space where participants can form a circle.

### Schedules and Breaks

Every workshop should include breaks and games. It is also important to provide food or refreshments. Many children will not have had breakfast so it is a good idea to provide tea or juice at the beginning.

## GROUP DYNAMICS

### Participation: A process of giving and receiving

This atmosphere should be established at the beginning through the leader's explanations and group exercises.

We always include activities to recognize the value of the participants' efforts. This might be a party or community presentation. It is also nice to give the participants some sort of keepsake. We frequently use the treasure box project for this.

Participation is often equated with group interaction. This can make for intense and exhausting sessions. It is also a limited understanding of participation. We try to pace our workshops so there is a mix of art and group discussions. This provides opportunities for everyone to contribute, not just those who shine in group discussions.



*Participants at a workshop in Huambo, Angola used a car as a table*

**Goals & Expectations**

The workshop objectives should be outlined at the first session. Participants should be given the opportunity to give their response and suggestions to the overall plan.

**Security Concerns**

Security issues should be discussed at the beginning of the workshop. In addition to concerns about anonymity, the group should identify other topics that fit inside the group's definition of personal security. The group should come to a mutual agreement on how these issues will be addressed.

**Committee Structure**

A good way to establish group participation is to create committees to handle tasks such as documentation, clean-up, time keeping and facilitation. The responsibilities of these committees can be adjusted to the skills of the group.

**Trust Building**

Few people confide in a stranger. It takes time to build trust with young people. In our experience it is best to provide a welcoming environment that invites their participation but recognizes it is their decision.

