



## PREPARING A WORKSHOP

The purpose of this paper is to support and encourage IFUW affiliates to prepare group participation workshops. This is not the only way of presenting a workshop. However, even those using other methods should still find these guidelines of interest.

**A workshop should be participative.** It can be defined as a group that has gathered in order to share their common interest in a given subject, to extend knowledge; to improve or develop personal skills; or to solve problems by sharing common experiences and knowledge.

Workshop leaders or facilitators provide the format and guidelines, and lead discussions so that everyone may contribute. **Participants are involved in activities designed to share experiences and discover new information.** Members must be willing both to work independently and to cooperate closely. A workshop will generate more ideas than an individual working alone and will promote confidence in agreed-upon outcomes.

### Preparation and Planning

- Select a topic that your prospective participants are likely to be interested in and to which they will be able to relate.
- Decide the overall objective of the workshop - what do you intend to achieve? Be specific and take account of the participants' varying backgrounds, cultures, languages and interests.
- Read as widely as possible about the topic and discuss your ideas with other people.
- Organize the content in a logical order. Divide your subject into smaller parts and allow time for questions and answers after each section. Plan carefully and provide for workshop participants to take an active part throughout.
- Prepare a detailed plan including each section of the workshop in writing. Time each section: This will keep the workshop moving and enable it to be completed on time.
- Arrange to have helpers in the group to ensure that all people are involved. IFUW can possibly assist you in identifying other members who may be interested in delivering a workshop on a similar topic, whom you could contact to work together.
- Consider preparing PowerPoint transparency headings. Provide for a back-up, felt pens and flip chart sheets in case the PowerPoint projector fails.
- Try your workshop out on a supportive group; obtain written evaluations and modify your workshop plan as appropriate.

## **Presentation**

- Keep the language, format and content of the workshop simple. For many IFUW participants, English is not the first language.
- Allow time for getting acquainted. Have a warm-up time at the beginning for people to get to know a little about their neighbours by introducing themselves and perhaps stating what they hope to achieve at the workshop.
- Establish an informal relaxed atmosphere, where possible, with seating in a circle or rectangle rather than rows for face-to-face discussion. Circulate a paper to record the names and addresses of participants.
- Keep in mind that your participants are adults and can bring a lot of information – workshops are a two-way street!
- After the introductions are completed, the guidelines are explained, the goals set and, any prepared material has been presented to the group, divide participants into smaller groups so everyone, particularly shy members or those with language difficulties, will have a chance to contribute. Give the groups clear and specific tasks.
- Each workshop leader should select a rapporteur to summarize the content and the outcome of the workshop. The summary should deal with concepts and include at least three outcomes in point form applicable for study and action. A suitable form will be given to the presenter to be used by the rapporteur for this purpose.
- Evaluation forms will be provided for each attendee so that the presenters can be appraised for the effectiveness of their presentations.

*Updated October 2009*