

Writeshops to surface synergies

A collaborative approach to documenting experiences and learning from peers

CARINA BACHOFEN (RED CROSS RED CRESCENT CLIMATE CENTRE)

In brief

Purpose of writeshops

To document stories in written form while benefiting from feedback from peers.

When to conduct writeshops?

Once you have gathered experiences and have stories to share – during the project or towards the end.

Who can participate?

This can be an opportunity to bring a range of stakeholders together; the more diverse the group the more interesting the stories become. It is important to include persons who have technical expertise or personal experience in the topic as well as an experienced writeshop facilitator.

How long does the process take?

Writeshops are very intense. Depending on the total number of outcome documents, they can last four to five days and require four to five days of preparation as well.

Description

A 'writeshop' is an intensive, participatory workshop that aims to produce some kind of written output. This may be a set of short case studies or even a bound book. Participants may include researchers, NGO staff, extension agents, farmers and other local stakeholders – anyone who has, in one way or another, been involved in the experiences to be documented. A team of facilitators, editors and logistics staff assists these participants.

During the writeshop, each participant (or team of participants), referred to as 'author(s)', presents the first draft of a case study paper. The other participants have a chance to ask for clarification on the draft and to give comments on the draft and suggest revisions. The facilitator allows as much discussion as possible so everyone can contribute his or her own knowledge on the topic (usually 30 minutes to one hour per revision



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round will suffice). The aim is not to criticise the manuscript but to improve it, to add to it and often to remove unnecessary information so it fits the end product and is appropriate for the target audience.

After his or her presentation, each author will talk to the editor assigned to the case study, who has also been taking notes on the discussion. The editor helps revise and edit the draft based on guidance provided by the author(s) on the best ways to address comments received. The revised drafts of each author or author team are then presented again and the audience can provide comments and suggestions

for a second time. After this series of presentations, an editor again helps revise the drafts. The final version can be completed, printed and distributed soon after the writeshop.

The writeshop process was pioneered by the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction and has been adapted by many institutions, including the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre. Using the writeshop methodology since 2013 in the context of the Partners for Resilience programme and later the BRACED programme, the Climate Centre has organised over 10 writeshops for over 100 participants producing over 50 case studies.

In the context of BRACED, the Knowledge Manager has invited researchers from the Implementing Partner teams to jointly produce research pieces of publishable quality. Writeshops are held every year, and provide an important opportunity to collectively generate documents on project activities and learn from other participating experts.

Acknowledgement

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