



Experience Worksheet

# WORKSHOP

for the SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

## Best Practices of an Adult Literacy Trainer: the Récasé Experience

During the initial phase of the Récasé project in Rwanda, an **evaluation was carried out on the farmer groups supported by the project** (referred to as Basic Community Organizations, or BCOs). This study found that **more than 40.6% of these groups' members were illiterate**. Consequently, in the project's second stage, there was a focus on identifying volunteer **farmer facilitator-trainers ("Paysans Animateurs Formateurs", or Pafos)** to conduct functional literacy classes in Kinyarwanda for the illiterate members of these groups.

Upon completing the first cohort, an analysis was undertaken to identify effective training and support practices for BCO members, influenced by the Pafos' experiences. This analysis has been developed into a guide for literacy trainers, offering insights from the Pafos' work within Rwanda's Récasé project. For a majority of these learners, it marks their first literacy training experience.



### Keeping a close connection with the learners

By engaging directly with them about the classes, their struggles, and even aspects of their everyday life. The Pafos' home visits to the learners help to foster a close bond, enabling a deeper understanding of the reasons behind their absences or delays, and aiding in reducing dropout rates. This approach often leads to the Pafos and learners developing friendships.

This closeness establishes a trusting relationship with the learners, encouraging them to feel comfortable sharing their challenges. This approach enables the Pafos to better prepare their classes by directly addressing the learners' specific concerns and issues.

#### Tailoring mentorship and progress tracking of learners based on their proficiency level

While the Pafos adhere to a set curriculum, they avoid dwelling excessively on complicated words that have little relevance to the learners' everyday lives. They prioritise lessons that are most beneficial to the learners.

In class, the Pafos also form groups based on different skill levels to vary the instruction. In some classes, a "mentorship" system has been implemented: the Pafos distribute books to the less advanced learners who can use them at home, while the other learners join them in using the book they bring back during classes.

When the student returns after an absence, the Pafos make sure they make up for missed classes by working a little later or arranging makeup sessions. To gain a better understanding of the challenges, absences, or delays experienced by the students, the Pafos may pay them visits at their residences and have conversations with both the students and their families. They engage in discussions with the students to stay informed about upcoming events like weddings or funerals that might prevent them from attending classes.

#### Preparing lessons

The Pafos prepare their lessons before each class. Here are two accounts describing how they prepare their lessons:

*"I consult the workbook to know the lessons I'll be teaching. I read through the lesson and compare it to my existing knowledge. If I've grasped the lesson well, I then document it in my notebook. As I go through the book, I envision how I'll convey the information. Additionally, I formulate questions related to the day's topic. It's akin to structuring the day's lesson. I allocate some time the day before to complete this preparation."*

*"I prepare at home by putting things down in writing. I set aside 2 hours before going to deliver the lesson. I allocate specific time for each segment. I make a note of the upcoming activity, always beginning with a review of the previous one. I also prepare the questions for the lesson. For instance, if there are images involved, I make a note of when and how I'll display the image and the comprehension questions associated with it. When you prepare in writing, you're essentially preparing in your mind at the same time, making it easier to convey knowledge."*

Being first to arrive in class

The Pafos make an effort to be the first to arrive, even in rainy weather, because if the learners are there before the Pafos, they might leave. This also provides an opportunity for more relaxed interactions with the learners before the class commences.

Frequent communication with all parties involved in literacy classes

The involved parties in the Récasé project encompass the members of the OCB offices, as well as the classroom administrators. The Pafos maintain regular exchanges with these individuals to confirm the classroom's availability.

The OCB office members set up reminders and motivate the learners to actively participate in classes. If there are any dropouts, the Pafos notify the OCB office to encourage the learners to return to classes.

Additionally, the Pafos communicate with the Récasé project team regarding any difficulties they face with the learners, seeking their guidance.

Suggesting initiatives to improve class cohesion and promote participation

For instance, rotating savings schemes (tontines) are organised in certain classes. There are also student leaders, or individuals elected by the class (particularly for managing the classroom key). The Pafos' role is to encourage and facilitate the implementation of these initiatives.

URL Link to the article: <https://atelier.fdh.org/en/take-action/our-experiences/support-and-alliance/article/best-practices-of-an-adult-literacy-trainer-the-recase-experience?lang=en>

Authors: **Duhamic-Adri et Adenya**

