

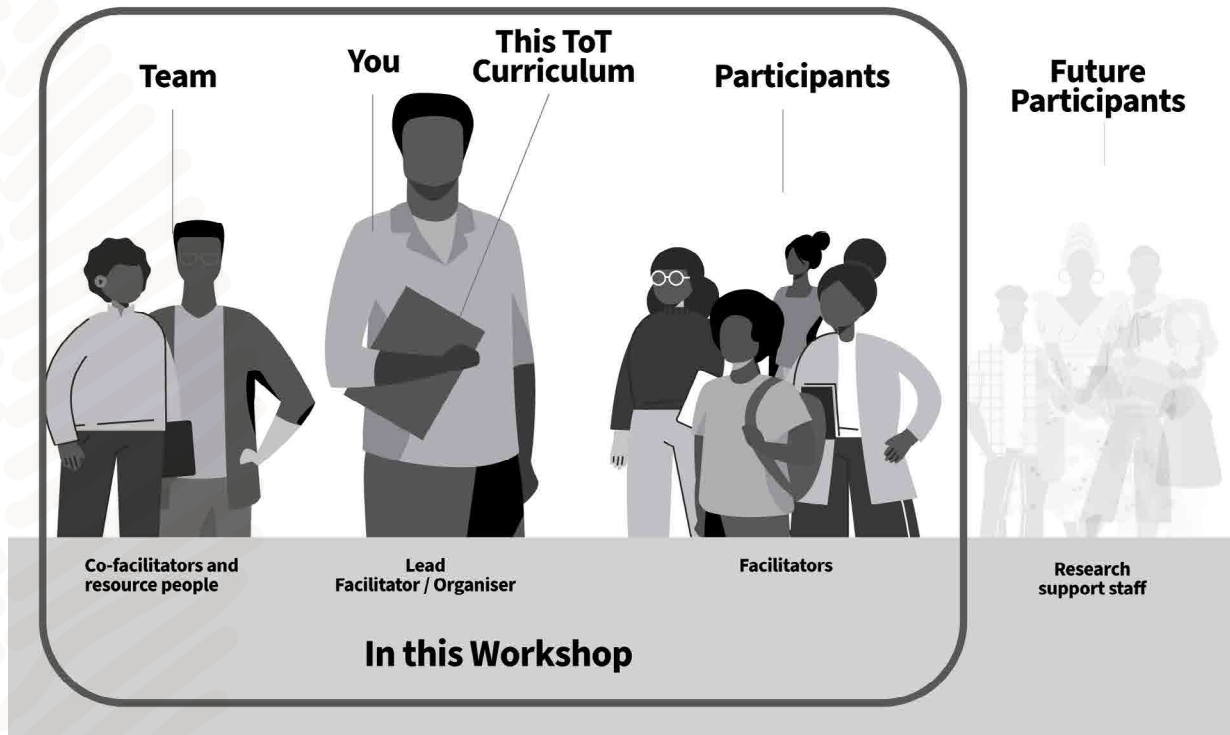
Institutional Support

Training of Trainers



This set of sessions strengthens the capacities and enthusiasm of facilitators to implement quality, participatory training for a wide range of Institutional Support staff, with the aim of building research-conducive eco-systems in universities and research centres.

This guidance is for you as the facilitator and/or organiser of the Training of Trainers (ToT)



Objectives

To experience and appreciate the CARTA learning approaches.

1. To value the contributions of various role players including academic, professional, and administrative staff towards supporting PhD students and research.
2. To give the participants an opportunity to explore and practise various training methods using CARTA techniques in a safe space.
3. To orient participants to the Institutional Support [curriculum](#) and give them time to explore and use it.
4. To work with colleagues to develop a step-down plan for action within their own institutions.
5. To consider desirable guidance, coaching, and/or mentorship for after the ToT.

Participants

Once trained, ToT participants will be expected to coordinate and co-facilitate Institutional Support workshops in their respective institutions. Think of these criteria when selecting the right candidates for this workshop:

- People involved in postgraduate training.
- CARTA graduates (where possible).
- People with facilitation skills.
- People in a position to advocate for Institutional Support workshops in their institutions.

Facilitator attributes

Share this list with the participants.

An unbiased perspective

Participants should feel comfortable that their opinions are welcomed and encouraged. An unbiased facilitator creates a neutral zone where alternative points of view can be shared and debated in a respectful manner. This is key to driving a constructive, productive discussion.

Sensitivity to individuals

To create and maintain an atmosphere of trust and respect requires the facilitator to be aware of how people are responding to the topics under discussion and to the opinions and reactions of others. Most people will not articulate their discomfort, hurt feelings, or even anger; instead, they silently withdraw from the discussion and often from the group. Sensing how people are feeling and understanding how to respond to a particular situation is a critical skill of facilitation.

Sensitivity to the group

In any group, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and group 'chemistry' generally reflects shared feelings: eagerness, restlessness, anger, boredom, enthusiasm, suspiciousness, or even silliness. Perceiving and responding to the group's dynamic is essential to skilful facilitation.

Ability to listen

One way the facilitator learns to sense the feelings of individuals is by listening carefully, noting both the explicit meaning of words and their tone and implicit meaning. A good facilitator practices 'active listening'. They may repeat, sum up, or respond directly to what a speaker says to ensure that the speaker's meaning is correctly understood by the group.

Tact

Sometimes, a facilitator must say difficult things for the good of the group. The ability to do so carefully and diplomatically is critical. Examples include a group discussion dominated by one person or a group of silent participants. The facilitator must find a gentle, tactful way to engage the team so everyone can participate and get the most out of the session. Often, a participant asks a question, and then rambles on, eventually answering his own question. A capable facilitator knows how to diffuse these awkward moments and maintain a productive atmosphere.

Commitment to collaboration


Collaborative learning can occasionally seem frustrating and inefficient. At these moments, every facilitator feels tempted to take on the familiar role of the traditional teacher and to lead, rather than facilitate. However, genuine conviction about the empowering value of cooperative learning will help the facilitator resist a dominating role. Likewise, a good facilitator is willing to share facilitation with others in the group. The goal is always to conduct the best and most effective discussion. To that end, a good facilitator knows how to adjust his or her role accordingly.

A sense of timing

The facilitator needs to develop a sixth sense for timing: when to bring a discussion to a close, when to change the topic, when to cut off someone who has talked too long, when to let the discussion run over the allotted time, and when to let the silence continue a little longer.

Resourcefulness and creativity

Each group of participants presents different dynamics. Despite a well-planned agenda, discussions may not unfold as anticipated. A good facilitator should be able to think on their feet. This may mean changing direction in mid-stream, using other creative



approaches to engage the group, or welcoming ideas from the group on how to shift the agenda. Good facilitators always have tricks up their sleeves that will help a group move forward while still keeping an eye on the overall objective of the meeting.

A sense of humour

As in most human endeavours, even the most serious, a sense of humour enhances the experience for everyone. A good facilitator appreciates life's ironies and is able to laugh at themselves and share the laughter of others.

Preparation

Invite minimum 10, maximum 30 participants.

Identify and book a spacious venue, with movable furniture and two additional breakaway rooms.

Prepare learning/training materials in advance as specified in the Institutional Support [curriculum](#), allowing access to materials in plenty of time for participants to prepare their practice sessions.

Share the links to the [playlist](#) of CARTA learning and teaching videos and invite participants to watch them in advance.

Sessions

Day 1

[Welcome and Roles](#)

[Introduction](#)

Outline the objectives of this TOT:

- Expectations
 - Group resources
 - Ground rules
 - Introduce the CARTA [approach](#)
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[Research Roles in Institutions](#)

[Reasons for Working in our Current Institutions](#)

[World-class Research](#)

Day 2

[Leadership Capabilities](#)

- Discuss academic citizenship and integrity
 - Note that content is designed for all categories
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[Institutional Challenges](#)

[Challenges in Other Institutions](#)

- Introduce the Marketplace
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[Research Governance](#)

[Advancing the Institutional Research Agenda](#)

Review for gender and inclusivity

Written individual commitments (see [Session 10](#), Step 4)

Evaluation of the workshop (see [Session 10](#), Step 3)

Were objectives achieved?

Methods and strategies of delivery

Lessons learnt

Plan Day 3

Allocate sessions so that participants can prepare

Day 3

Participants practise facilitating Institutional Support workshop sessions

Participants take turns co-facilitating sessions.

Depending on the number of the ToT attendees, you may divide them into smaller groups of 8 to 12 participants per group.

Two participants co-facilitate a given session. Their peers participate and then provide feedback at the end.

Rotate the facilitation until all the ToT participants have co-facilitated at least one session.

After each session, give time for:

Own reflections on the experience

Peer feedback

Your input, as TOT facilitator

Day 4

Facilitate a discussion of the workshop process.

[Step-down Planning](#)