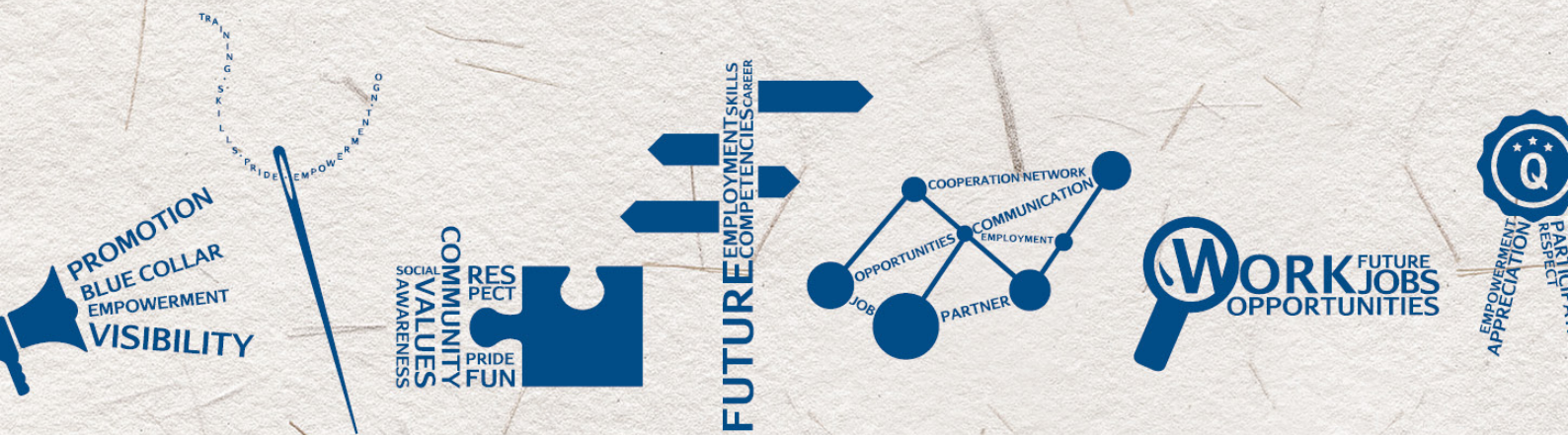




6.2 HOW TO TRAIN WOMEN FOR HANDICRAFT WORK



HOW TO TRAIN WOMEN FOR HANDICRAFT WORK



What Is It Useful For

This tool will help to teach **women necessary skills** to produce handicraft products at home. It is highly recommended to base this tool 6.2 on [tool 6.1](#), where the mobilisation of a local community for such a project is described.



When To Use

The tool can be applied if women want to generate income through handicraft production and sales, but do not yet have the skills and knowledge how to produce them.



How Long Does It Take

Approx. 2-6 months for identification of trainers, training room and actual training courses



What Is Needed

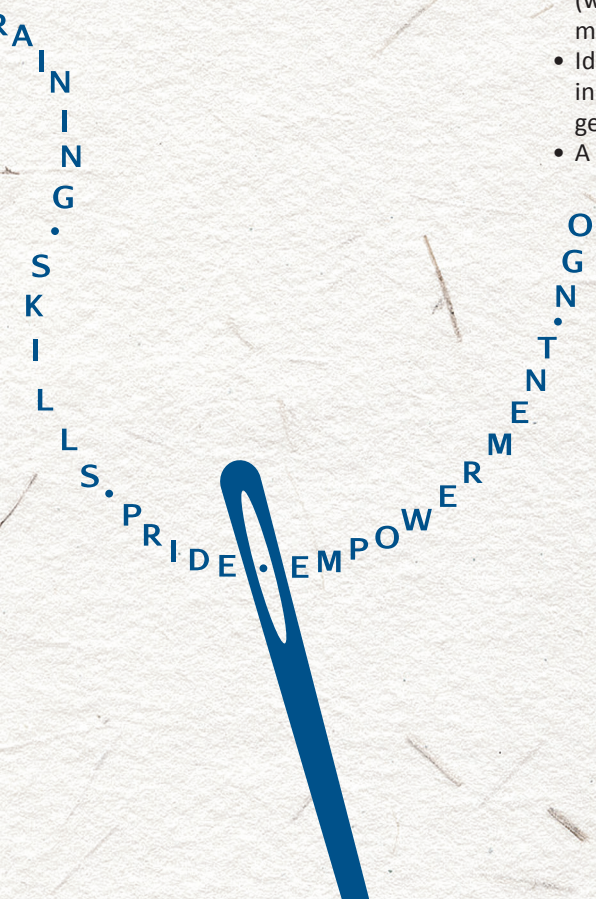
- Trainers with a curriculum
- A room where the training can take place (with furniture, electricity, storage for material and equipment)
- Ideally a small pocket money for trainees in case they need public transportation to get to the training place
- A training kit, including training materials



Examples

The approach has been successfully applied in the handicraft textile sector in Fayoum, in Sinai as well as in Greater Cairo. Tools 6.1 – 6.4 might also be applied in other sectors, where the required work fulfils the following criteria:

- Allows for homework at local level
- Has a culturally acceptable image
- Is already known to a certain extent to the local community
- Requires relatively low investment costs for required resources
- Requires low to medium level of technical skills, which can be acquired rather easily



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WHAT TO DO

In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives, the following steps should be undertaken:

1

IDENTIFY A SUITABLE TRAINER

A highly motivated trainer should be identified. Ideally, it should be a woman (due to easier access to female target group), and should be **encouraging, very knowledgeable, patient with mistakes, respectful and ideally Egyptian (otherwise culturally sensitive) and speak the local language**. She should also be respected by trainees.

In addition, she should have a high awareness for the **importance of quality work**, which is one important key success factor for selling products later on.

Suitable trainers can be identified through NGO networks, local activists, local administrations, project reports and records of trainings / events of relevant development projects etc.

If possible, the trainer could work on a voluntary basis (which would keep overall training costs low) while expressing a **long-term commitment**.

2

IDENTIFY A TRAINING ROOM

The training room should be in a location which is **close to the project community**, and which trainees can access easily. Longer distances with public transportation considerably decrease chances for women to participate in trainings. In addition, it should be located in a **safe area**, and preferably in a setting where **mainly women are present**, which will allow more women to join the training based upon the consent of their husbands/fathers. If feasible, the room should be located for example in the premises of a **reputable NGO which already has a good relationship and outreach to women**.

The training room itself should be **large enough** for the number of trainees. It should be well illuminated ideally with **day light**, and not be too **hot/cold** in summer/winter time. It should have electricity and ideally a storage room. Acceptable sanitary facilities are indispensable for overall clean work.

3

ELABORATE / FIND BEST TRAINING APPROACH

The basic principle of trainings in marginalised urban and rural areas is a **holistic approach**, i.e. besides skills training it should also include elements of e.g. quality, health, hygiene, basic literacy and generic life skills.

At the same time, the training content should be directed towards the **market-oriented products** which will be produced and sold later on and teach the **practical skills** that the women will require producing the handicraft work in the quality required.

Furthermore, the training approach should also take into consideration the **level of skills** that the women already dispose. In cases where most of the women have little or no skills, no skills assessment is needed. If the level of skills will presumably differ considerably, a **simple skills assessment** might be useful. Besides relevant handicraft skills, the assessment could also include:

- **Potential preferences** of the women for certain techniques
- Identification of women with **particular talents** (e.g. a good feeling for colours / designs, a high attitude towards quality management, excellent organisational skills, knowledge of local traditional patterns or techniques), which can be used later on during training and production
- Identification of **key persons** among the women who can help trainers and project manager with keeping the women motivated and disciplined

Based on the results, a **differentiated training** for beginners and advanced women can be offered.

For the elaboration of training materials, one should keep in mind that most women might be **illiterate**. Thus, even taking measures or counting might be difficult. In this case, training methods will largely need to rely on constant **visual demonstration** of each required step and **learning by doing**. Another tool could be simple **self-made videos** where trainers show critical steps / techniques and which can be watched by the trainees on their mobile phones.

In principle, project experience proves that trainees prefer to learn based upon **clear instructions and guidance**. Thus, the training approach should be based upon clearly defined steps for each training unit.

As a source of inspiration, a [training manual for patchwork](#) can be found in the annex. In particular in the field of handicraft, there is a **vast variety of training manuals** developed in English and Arabic. It is recommended to build on such ready-made materials.

In addition, it is useful to prepare a **small training kit** for each woman. It should include the main material which is required for the training course. Experience shows that if a small fee is taken for each kit, ownership and commitment can be increased.

QUALITY JOBS
EMPLOYER JOBS



WHAT TO DO

In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives, the following steps should be undertaken:

5

IMPLEMENT TRAINING

Depending on the availability and skills level of the women, the training course should take approx. **2-3 months** with training courses of **2-3 hours** taking place **2-3 times per week**.

At the beginning of the course, the trainer and / or project manager should clearly **present the next steps** ahead. This includes information on how long the training will take place, what will the women learn, when they can start the production and what would they earn. In particular, the trainer should underline the **importance of quality**. Only high quality products can be sold and will lead to income. It might be helpful to demonstrate the required level of quality by showing high quality handicraft products available on the market.

As mentioned above, during training **clear instructions** should be given to the trainees on what to do exactly. Also, **repetition** should be included as main training method. This also refers to **constant quality control** of items produced by the trainees and a joint discussion among the training participants whether this is a high quality product and why / why not.

Ideally, the training should **be adapted to the personal circumstances and family obligations** of the women. This refers mainly to training hours and timing.

6

FOCUS ON QUALITY OF WORK DURING TRAINING COURSE

The holistic training approach will also foster aspects of quality of work. Project experience proves that the quality of the product, including its accuracy and cleanliness, is a **decisive selling point for customers**.

It is therefore a **crucial element** which requires continuous attention throughout training.

7

ENCOURAGE TRAINING OF TRAINERS

It is highly recommended to encourage women in the training course which show **excellent handicraft skills** and have a certain level of education to act as trainers themselves. The only thing they would need is some extra training and **coaching** for their new role as trainers. What is however important, is to **clarify the new role** of these women towards the other trainees in order to be respected trainer.

In addition to their new training function, they can also serve as **multipliers in their environment**.

4

REGISTER WOMEN FOR THE TRAINING COURSES

It is recommended to register the training participants before the course starts. This contributes to a more **binding commitment** and visualises the **sincerity of the interest** on the women's side.

During the training course, a **participants list** can also contribute to bindingness and is indispensable if pocket-money is provided. Furthermore documentation of participation and progress made will help to potentially adapt the training accordingly and / or later on distribute the production work according to skills developed.





WHAT TO OBSERVE

The following lessons learnt should be observed:

The training should always be linked to a **concrete and realistic chance to generate income in a short timeframe**. This considerably increases the motivation of the women to learn as fast and good as possible.

It could be advisable to focus first on **handicraft skills which can be easily learned and quickly allow for production of marketable products**. Thus, within short timeframes, women can start producing and earning income and continue learning later on / in parallel to working.

High quality production is one of the key requirements for successful selling of handicraft. The training should thus focus on this issue, and explain that only **high quality training and production results will lead to income**.

In case the number of women that register for the first training unit is **lower than expected**, the training should nevertheless start. The trained women will spread information about the course in the community, and other women will join based upon this **word of mouth** information which is considered most trustworthy.

One should be aware of the fact that people without any previous learning experience **learn considerably slower** than people with even basic school education.

The handicraft techniques might in certain cases lead to **physical discomfort**, which

should be avoided as much as possible through **appropriate work places** etc. Lack of accuracy is in certain cases linked to limited eyesight / lacking glasses.

Regular participation of women is more likely if some kind of **child care** during training hours can be offered.

Acceptance of trainings and trainers grows when the focus does not only lie on technical trainings but **social issues** are addressed as well. This could be done by means of talking about hygiene, or by encouraging and supporting **peer to peer literacy classes** among the women by providing books, pencils and notebooks. This also creates a bond between the women of the community and a feeling of empowerment.

