



Case Study

INTRODUCTION

StipTrain is the trading name used by ‘Stipendiary Training Resources Partnership’. This is a not-for-profit organisation that offers a range of training and development services to public and community service organisations, and to NGO’s. The title defines its purpose and ethos:

- **‘Stipendiary’**, because nothing is free. People, services and resources have to be paid for - although the source of funding may vary.
- **‘Training’**, because this defines the primary purpose of the partnership - although *‘development’* is another term of equal importance.
- **‘Resources’**, because at the heart of effective, efficient training and development is the availability of facilities, competent trainers and learning resource materials.
- **‘Partnership’**, because StipTrain exists to serve the needs of its partner organisations, along with their customers and beneficiaries.

StipTrain’s partners share the characteristics of being dedicated to public service, staffed and managed by local people, and driven by their energy and vision. Some are government bodies whilst others are non-governmental organisations (NGO’s). Initially, the governmental bodies were mainly national level water supply ministries and local government health, water and sanitation departments. More recently, StipTrain partnerships have become available to a wider range of sectors, reflecting a common need for help with training and development.

State-level ministries of rural development, along with CAPART (the government agency funding Indian NGO’s) UNICEF and UNDP are partners of StipTrain, providing resource support and funding projects being run by partner organisations.

The NGO’s range from new groups working in one district to long established institutions working all over the country. During the initial development of StipTrain, some partner NGO’s specialised in water supply; others involved with primary health care and urban development. More recently, StipTrain has attracted partners from social forestry and watershed development.

Flexibility has proved the crucial element of StipTrain’s ability to establish and maintain substantial numbers of partners.

STIPTRAINERS

StipTrain employs a team of trainers, designated as ‘Certificated StipTrainers’. These people have experience of working in partner organisations and now work, full or part-time, to provide professional trainer services.

As a not-for-profit organisation, StipTrain welcomes the involvement of personnel from partner organisations. These people are given training and development opportunities to become certificated StipTrainers, who can then make a contribution to training and development activities, as and when their services are needed.

The role of part-time certificated associate StipTrainers in partner organisations is one that is actively supported by senior management. Because of its high status, StipTrain has no difficulty attracting high calibre people as prospective associate trainers. Stipends are given to StipTrainers, based on an appropriate daily rate.

It is the policy of StipTrain to maintain a system for ‘quality assurance’. This is regarded as essential to ensure the confidence and support of partner organisations. All training and development services are therefore monitored.

FUNDING

A dictionary definition of ‘stipend’ is *‘a sum paid as a salary or expenses to a public official’*. And for ‘stipendiary’ as *‘receiving a stipend; working for pay rather than voluntarily - a person receiving a stipend’*. These definitions are reflected in the way that StipTrain is funded. For example:

1. It receives a stipend from each partner. Some, such as funding agencies, provide substantial funds whereas smaller NGO’s provide only nominal sums.
2. From partner stipends, sufficient funds are taken to cover fixed costs. These are kept to the minimum.
3. A proportion of partner stipends are allocated to the development of a learning resource centre, with open access to partner organisations.
4. Sufficient funds are set aside to pay for a small team of training professionals - StipTrainers -who provide professional services to partner organisations.
5. From partner stipends, each partner organisation is allocated three days of ‘free’ professional services per month.
6. Additional resource support and professional services are available to partner organisations to meet specific requirements.
7. Training courses are run, as and when a need is identified. These incur additional fees.
8. Each partner organisation is encouraged to develop its own team of ‘in-house’ StipTrainers, whose training and continuing development is supported by StipTrain.

THE CHALLENGE OF PARTNERSHIP

Without partners, StipTrain would not exist, and without financial support, no services can be provided. This creates a dynamic, challenging relationship where StipTrain's services are thoroughly evaluated. Feedback from partners enables StipTrain to improve the resources and services it offers.

Successful partnerships are dynamic, multi-dimensional process, each organisation learning from the other in a climate of mutual respect. For StipTrain and the partner organisations it works with, the challenge is to sustain and strengthen these vital relationships.

Partners' extensive experience of implementing community projects helps StipTrain to refine its own policies, resources and working practices. The introduction of the Evaluation of Training, systems, procedures and a training management information system (TMIS) can be established. This will enable StipTrain to improve the quality of its services and encourage partners to share their knowledge and ideas with each other.

EVALUATION OF TRAINING SERVICES

The aim is to establish an EoT system that satisfies the needs of StipTrain, itself, and can be used to support training and development in partner organisations. The system has to provide the following information:

- Evidence to confirm the quality of learning activities being carried out in partner organisations.
- Proof that training provided has met identified training needs.
- Evidence to support a claim that the outcome of training has resulted in improved performance.
- Details of the number of people trained, and the costs per trainee.
- Utilisation of StipTrain's learning resource centre.
- Proof that the training provided is then used in the workplace.