



Right to Information

Training Module

for

Citizens at Community Level

inter
cooperation

Swiss Foundation for Development and
International Cooperation

Right to Information

Training Module for Citizens at Community Level

inter
cooperation

Swiss Foundation for Development
and International Cooperation

Citizens' Right to Information

Training Module

The use and sharing of information given in this document is encouraged, with due acknowledgement of the source.

Content:

Intercooperation, Bangladesh under its Local Governance Programme (SHARIQUE) which is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in collaboration with the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

Funded by:

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
World Bank Institute (WBI)

Translated in English by

ATM Azmul Huda
Tirtha Sarathi Sikder
Matthias Boss

Design and Layout of English version

Md. Sultan Mahmud
Nurul Islam

Copies available from

Intercooperation
House No. 2F NE (D)
Road No. 73 (G)
Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1212
Bangladesh
info@intercooperation-bd.org

Disclaimer: The opinions that are published in this book do not necessarily reflect those of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Switzerland Government, the Canadian International Development Agency and the Canadian Government and the executive directors of the World Bank or the governments they represent.



Foreword

With the endorsement of the 'Right to Information Act 2009' and its subsequent enforcement on April 6, 2009, Bangladesh entered into a new era in which information is allowed to flow freely and citizens have access to information. No doubt, this law will contribute significantly to the economic development of Bangladesh. If this law is applied properly, the degree of transparency and accountability in the government, in autonomous and statutory bodies and in non-government agencies will increase considerably and corruption will reduce. It will also contribute to a further acceleration of good governance and decentralization processes at both national and local levels. Lastly, it will result into a free flow of information with regard to our development projects and play a positive role in ensuring proper utilization of development finances.

The local governance program (Sharique) implemented by Intercooperation has developed a set of training manuals on Right to Information. The set consists of 3 manuals for different levels, namely (1) for citizens at village level, (2) for Union Parishads and Government Line Agencies and (3) for Upazilla Parishads. These training manuals will inspire both citizens and local government actors to work together to strengthen local governance in Bangladesh. I do thank Intercooperation for this timely and useful initiative.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'মহাম্মদ জামির' (Mohammad Jamir).

Mohammad Jamir
Chief Information Commissioner
Information Commission, Bangladesh



Preface

The local governance program Sharique started in 2006. The program is implemented by Intercooperation and financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and provides assistance to improve local governance in 130 Union Parishads and 21 Upazilla Parishads in Bangladesh. Union Parishads in the Sharique working regions are supported to proactively

disclose information to the citizens while 'access to information' is a key component of the processes that Sharique follows. With the newly enacted law 'Right to Information Act 2009', the good practices followed by involved UPs have been legalized and are now mandatory. The law permits citizens the right to formal application for information and gives authorities the obligation to supply the requested information. This is recognized as a breakthrough initiative in Bangladesh. With these new developments in mind, Sharique initiated collaboration with the World Bank Institute (WBI) and undertook a one year project to prepare training manuals on Right to Information (RTI). These manuals will be used for conducting training at the level of villages, Union Parishads and Upazilla Parishads.

Under the initiative, Sharique had assistance of the Delhi based organization Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI). This organization provided different technical support including an orientation of Sharique staff, followed by an intensive consultation process to prepare the training manuals. Extensive peer review, two rounds of field tests and a national consultation workshop were conducted. In the process, opinions of the representatives of different government institutions and institutes, CBOs, NGOs, civil society, donor agencies and academics were sought. Different individuals and organizations played a very meaningful contribution to this achievement. Salua, Sardaha and Harogram UPs, Bargachhi and Silinda CBOs in Rajshahi district, Talbon CBO in Sunamganj district and Titas UP of Comilla extended wonderful cooperation to make field testing successful.

Whenever advices were sought, CHRI, and especially their representatives, Sohini Paul and Venkatesh Nayar were ready to provide it. Besides, Mohammad Jamir, the Chief Information Commissioner-Bangladesh and Mrs. Sadika Halim, the Information Commissioner, came forward with necessary advices at different times to enrich the work. Hard work and meaningful contribution was given by the Sharique staff. Intercooperation is grateful to all these individuals.

As a result of the use of these manuals, citizens will become aware of how to demand information from authorities and Union and Upazilla level officials will attain adequate skills in supplying this information. Apart from this, I do hope that these training manuals will contribute to better collaboration between citizens and their local governments and to an increase in transparency and accountability in government and non-government functioning in Bangladesh.

A T M Azmul Huda

Deputy Delegate, Intercooperation-Bangladesh and National Coordinator, Sharique, Intercooperation

Table of Contents

Outline of the module	8
Session 1: Introduction	9
Session 2: Realizing the importance of the right to information	11
Session 3: Benefits of access to information for citizens	16
Session 4: Legal basis of the right to information and procedures related to RTI	20
Session 5: How to access information?	24
Session 6: Concluding Session	32

Outline of the module

Objective :

1. Participants are aware about their right to information.
2. Participants are capable to access information from different government and non-government bodies.

Participants:

Citizens, women and men, of rural Bangladesh including the poorest and marginalized

No. of participants : 25 - 30

Duration : 5 hours 5 min (1 day OR spread over to 2 days)

Venue : Community setting (e.g. in a courtyard)

Training schedule

(Day 1)

- ◆ Session 1: Introduction (20 min)
- ◆ Session 2: Realising the importance of the right to information (50 min)
- ◆ Session 3: Benefits of access to information for citizens (40 min)
- ◆ Session 4: Legal basis of the right to information and procedures (55 min)

(Day 2)

- ◆ Session 5: How to access information? (1 h 45 min)
- ◆ Session 6: Concluding session (35 min)

Session 1:

Introduction

Objective of session:

Participants will know the training objectives and get introduced to each other and the trainers.
Duration: 20 minutes

Methodology:

- ◆ Self introduction
- ◆ Questions and answers

Training material:

- ◆ Training objectives
- ◆ Training programme

Training aids:

Poster paper, rope, masking tape, flipchart board with stand, if available, otherwise rope and masking tape to hang poster papers, clips

Process:

Step 1: (5 min)

The trainer welcomes the participants and explains the objectives of the training as presented on a poster paper¹. He/she then asks 1-2 participants to briefly explain in their own words the objectives.

Step 2: (5 min)

The trainer asks the participants to introduce themselves. At the end of the round of introduction the trainer and co-trainer also say a few words about themselves.

Step 3: (5 min)

The trainer displays a poster paper with the workshop programme² and explains the same to the participants.

Step 4: (5 min)

The trainer asks the participants to set the norms of the workshop which will be noted down on a poster paper by the co-trainer. Norms that are expected to be mentioned are the following:

- Switch off mobile phones or put them in silent mode
- Listen to others when they speak
- Give each participants equal chance to speak and contribute
-

¹ Note 1A: Poster paper Objectives of training

² Note 1B: Poster paper Training schedule

Notes for trainers - Session 1

Note 1A: Objectives of training

- ◆ Participants are aware about their right to information
- ◆ Participants are capable to access information from different government and non-government bodies

Note 1B: Training programme

(Day 1)

- ◆ Session 1: Introductory session (20 min)
- ◆ Session 2: Realising the importance of the right to information (50 min)
- ◆ Session 3: Benefits of access to information for citizens (40 min)
- ◆ Session 4: Legal basis of the right to information and procedures (55 min)

(Day 2)

- ◆ Session 5: How to access information? (1 h 45 min)
- ◆ Session 6: Concluding session (35 min)

Session 2:

Realizing the importance of the right to information

Objective of session:

The participants will realize the meaning and value of right to information as a means of accessing information related to services in order to fulfil their basic needs.

Duration: 50 minutes

Methodology:

- ◆ Story telling
- ◆ Brain storming
- ◆ Presentation
- ◆ Plenary discussion

Training material:

- ◆ Objectives of session 2
- ◆ Diagram on rights, information and services
- ◆ Stories on access to information

Training aids:

Poster paper, rope, masking tape, marker pens, flipchart board with stand, if available, otherwise rope and masking tape to hang poster papers, clips.

Process:

Step 1: (5 min)

Welcome participants and share what the session is about including its objectives with the help of a poster paper³ .

Step 2: (10 min)

Narrate the two stories⁴ in regard to access to information .

After narrating the stories the trainer asks the participants whether they understood the story and what they have learnt from the stories regarding the issue of information. He/she could use the following question for this purpose:

- ◆ What did you understand from the stories?
- ◆ What difference did the lack or the availability of information make in the two stories?

Give maximum five minutes for the feedback.

³ Note 2A: Objectives of session 2

⁴ Note 2B: Stories on access to information

Step 3: (15 min)

The trainer mentions that the narrated stories were hypothetical ones, which could however be found also in regard to other issues like health, education, agriculture, fishery, khash land, safety-net programmes etc. He/She then asks the participants to think about similar experiences they have faced in their lives when accessing different public services. Ask the participants the following questions to think about the story they want to share:

- ◆ What problems have you faced in accessing public services due to the lack of access to information?
- ◆ What did you do to overcome the problems of lack of access to information?
Ask four participants to volunteer to tell their story. Keep in mind to have male and female volunteers.

The co-trainer writes the major points of the participants' stories related to access to information on a poster paper.

Step 4: (5 min)

Summarise and highlight the key points that emerged from the stories and experiences told by the participants in regard to lack of information using those written down by the co-trainer.

Step 5: (10 min)

The trainer then explains the meaning and linkages between the terms 'rights', 'information' and 'services' with the help of a diagram⁵. In doing so, he/she can draw on examples from the stories told by the participants.

While the trainer gives her/his explanations the co-trainer writes the examples given next to the corresponding term.

Step 6: (5 min)

The trainer asks the participants what they have learnt from this session.

⁵ Note 2C: *Diagram on Rights, Information and Services*

Notes for trainers - Session 2

Note 2A: Objectives of session 2

To introduce the concept of Right to Information: what it is and why it is important for citizens, Union Parishad representatives and government line agencies.

Note 2B: Stories on access to information

Story 1

Story 1

Nasifa Rehan, a widow from Palashbari village with two small children, was keen to send her older daughter who had just turned seven to school. However, Nasifa did not have enough money to buy the required text books, neither the money to buy good clothes for her daughter.

Nasifa inquired with her neighbours whether they knew about schemes that provide text books for free. One of her neighbours mentioned that she had heard that there is both a government scheme and a scheme by an NGO. Nasifa visited the nearby school to get information on the mentioned schemes. When she visited the school, the head master was absent and there was no notice when he could be found in his office, neither could any teacher inform her when and how she could contact him. So she headed to the Union Parishad office to inquire. The Union Parishad Secretary said that he had not received any information from the education department and neither from the NGO working in the Union that such a scheme existed. The Union Parishad Secretary apologised that he could neither provide Nasifa with the information how she could reach the NGO nor the Upazila education officer by telephone since he did himself not have the contact details.

Nasifa did not give up and visited the nearby Upazila headquarter to inquire about such schemes. Unfortunately, the concerned education officer was not present since she had gone to visit a school. Nasifa also did not find any information on the notice board about a scheme that provides free text books.

Nasifa was very disappointed and upset that nobody could provide her with the required information. For the time being Nasifa decided therefore not to enrol her daughter to primary school but wait for a while until she could afford the costs.

In fact the NGO working in Nasifa's Union had a scheme for poor widows to support them with stipends for their children. The government had also a scheme to provide text books and education material but somehow, the information about those schemes was not appropriately disseminated.

Story 2

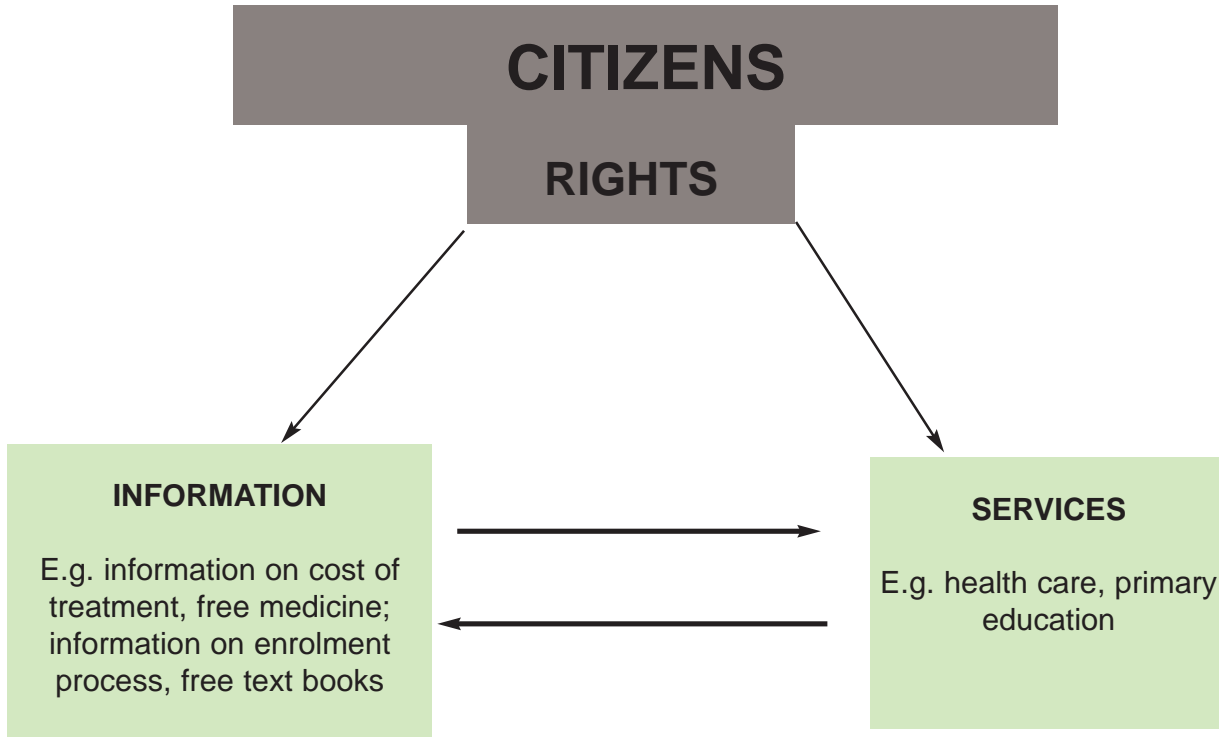
Ashraf Kamal, a share-cropper of Rupnagar village, noticed one day that some leaves in his potato field curled and became dry. He asked some of the other farmers what that could mean. One of his neighbours mentioned that it must be a disease but that he did not know what could be done about it. He suggested Ashraf Kamal to visit the office of the Sub-Assistant Agricultural Extension Officer (SAAEO) located in the Union Parishad complex.

As Ashraf Kamal arrived at the office of the SAAEO at 2 pm on a Wednesday afternoon the office was closed. There was a notice mentioning that the SAAEO was usually present in his office on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday from 9am to 12am. The notice also mentioned the mobile number of the Agricultural Extension officer.

Since Ashraf Kamal did not want to wait until the following Sunday he decided to call the Agricultural Extension officer with the mobile of his neighbour. The SAAEO replied to the call and upon listening to Ashraf Kamal's observation about his potato plants, he informed him that the potatoes were most probably infested with a common disease which can be treated. The SAAEO promised to visit Kamal's field.

The next day SAAEO visited Kamal's field and diagnosed the disease as potato blight disease. He told him to buy a fungicide and explained him how to apply it. Within a week Kamal's problem was solved.

Note 2C: Diagram on Rights, Information and Services



Explanation for trainers:

Citizens have a number of rights like the right to health care and the right to primary education. Unless people have access to information regarding their rights, these rights do not help them. Access to information is therefore the pre-requisite to claim and enjoy our rights.

Session 3:

Benefits of access to information for citizens

Objective of session:

Participants understand the benefits of access to information for citizens.

Duration: 40 minutes

Methods:

- ◆ Video show or presentation of newspaper article
- ◆ Plenary discussion

Training material:

- ◆ Poster paper with objectives of session 3
- ◆ Video or newspaper article
- ◆ Poster presentation on benefits of RTI

Training aids:

Laptop and multimedia projector with power back up and screen (if available).

Process:

Step 1: (5 min)

Share what the session is about including its objectives with the help of a poster paper⁶.

Step 2: (20 min)

The trainer will invite the participants to watch a video⁷ on the benefits of the Right to Information or will read the newspaper report⁸ related to RTI to the participants, mentioning that it was published in the Daily Star on January 22, 2010.

⁶ Note 3A: Objectives of session 3

⁷ Note 3B: Video on the right to information

⁸ Note 3C: Newspaper report on the right to information

Step 3: (10min)

The trainer asks the participants to mention:

- ◆ What they have understood from the video or the news paper article
- ◆ What benefits citizens received
- ◆ Why they received those benefits

If necessary, she/he can ask what benefits they got due to access/right to information. She/he asks what other benefits could be obtained from different levels due to access to information. The co-trainer writes the participants responses on a flip chart.

Step 4 (5min):

The trainer then concludes the session by referring to some salient responses from the participants and further points covered in the respective note⁹ for trainers. He/she needs to draw out the issue that access to information can finally benefit the citizens to get (better) services from government line agencies, the Union Parishad, NGOs and the Upazila.

⁹Note 3D: *Benefits of right to information for citizens and community*

Notes for trainers - Session 3

Note 3A: Objectives of session 3

Participants understand the benefits of access to information for citizens.

Note 3B: Video on the right to information

See CD enclosed

Note 3C: Newspaper report on the Right to Information

Union Parishad Chairman forced to provide actual share of VGF rice

The Daily Star, Friday, January 22, 2010

Lemshikhali Union Parishad chairman of Kutubdia Upazila in Cox's Bazar was forced to distribute 9.5 kilogram of rice to each VGF card holder recently after the recipients staged an angry demonstration demanding actual allocation of rice.

The queuing cardholders became angry when the UP chairman said that each is going to receive 7 kg of rice. However, Rafiqul Islam, an inhabitant of the union, earlier informed the people that actual allocation of rice was 10 kg per head instead of 7 kg as per the government decision.

Rafiqul, making use of the Right to Information (RTI) Act 2009 in November last year, came to know that the government will distribute rice free of cost to the poor people of Lemshikhali Union under the VGF programme. He came to know about the RTI during a sensitization meeting in his union organised by Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre (BDPC) and supported by Manusher Jonno Foundation. To justify the information, he later contacted the project implementation officer (PIO) of Kutubdia and wanted to know more. The PIO informed Rafiqul that 10 kg of rice per head has been allocated for 2,725 poor people of Lemshikhali Union.

He soon spread the information among the people. The cardholders raised protest against the UP chairman's decision of distributing 7 kg of rice per head instead of 10 kg. The UP chairman argued that it is not possible to distribute the actual share to each card holder as he needs to make up for his carrying costs and other expenses for the distribution. Amid protest, finally, the chairman was compelled to distribute 9.5 kg of rice to each cardholder.

Note 3D: Benefits of right to information for citizens and community (for trainer's reference)

1. Due to access to information citizens are able to claim their rights (e.g. Right to Health: community representatives demanding for better health services at the Union level because they know they can receive medicines and treatment free of cost);
2. Citizens can participate in the preparation of UP planning and budget making process because they know that they have a role to play in the planning process;
3. Citizens have more equal opportunities to access services and resources (e.g. citizens receive training on livestock and poultry rearing which are available for all, landless are given the ownership of khash land);
4. Citizens have access to socio economic opportunities (e.g. improved agricultural practices through accessing new technologies by knowing available resources and services);
5. Citizens can get better services (e.g. in the village schools and madrasas teachers regularly attend classes and teach the students properly);
6. Citizens are able to ensure that the various developmental works in the villages are carried out properly(e.g. roads, drinking water, sewerage, schools and madrasa, playground);
7. Real beneficiaries will be selected for safety net services (eg. VGF, VGD, widow allowance, old age allowance, disability allowance);
8. Access to information will help in the reduction of corruption.

Session 4:

Legal basis of the right to information and procedures related to RTI

Objectives of session:

- ◆ Participants are aware that they have the right to access information from government and non-government bodies and that these bodies have the obligation to provide information
- ◆ Participants know the process of accessing information

Duration: 55 minutes

Method:

- ◆ Presentations
- ◆ Questions and answers

Training material:

- ◆ Poster with objectives of session 4
- ◆ Poster presentation on the legal provisions regarding access to information
- ◆ Posters presentation on process of accessing information

Training aids:

Poster papers, permanent markers, flipchart board with stand, if available, otherwise rope and masking tape to hang poster papers

Process:

Step 1: (5 min)

The trainer shares what the session is about including its objectives with the help of a poster paper¹⁰.

Step 2: (10 min)

The trainer tells participants that the Government of Bangladesh has realized the importance of ensuring access to information for the citizens. The reason for this is that citizens in a democracy like Bangladesh are the ultimate owners of the country, its resources and its information. Any information that the government holds, is finally the property of the citizens. This is why the government introduced a law on the Right to Information in 2009.

¹⁰ Note 4A: Objectives of session 4

The trainer shows a copy of the RTI Act 2009 to the participants.

He/she tells the participants that the uniqueness of this law is that for the first time a law asks citizens to become active i.e. to apply for information and obliges the government to comply with the law i.e. the obligation to provide the requested information. In most other laws it is the government that has to act and the citizens who have to comply.

Step 3: (10 min)

The trainer then makes a presentation by the use of a prepared poster¹¹ on the legal provisions regarding the right to access information.

Step 4: (5 min)

After the presentation the trainer asks the participants whether they have any questions or comments regarding the presentation.

Step 5: (20 min)

The trainer then presents the process of applying for information, appeal and filing a complaint ¹² . At the end of the presentation he/she asks the participants whether they have any questions or comments regarding the presentation.

Step 6: (5 min)

The trainer will conclude the session by asking four volunteers, picked among the participants, to mention some new lessons drawn from the session.

¹¹ Note 4B: Presentation on legal provisions regarding the right to access information

¹² Note 4C: Presentation on process of accessing information

Notes for trainers - Session 4

Note 4A: Objectives of session 4

- ◆ Participants are aware that they have the right to access information from government and non-government bodies and that these bodies have the obligation to provide information
- ◆ Participants know the process of accessing information

Note 4B: Presentation on legal provisions regarding the right to access information

Constitution of Bangladesh

- The constitution is the foundation on which our country's system is built. It guarantees the citizens' rights
- According to the constitution a citizen of Bangladesh has freedom of thought, conscience, speech and expression (Article 39)

Right to Information Act, 2009

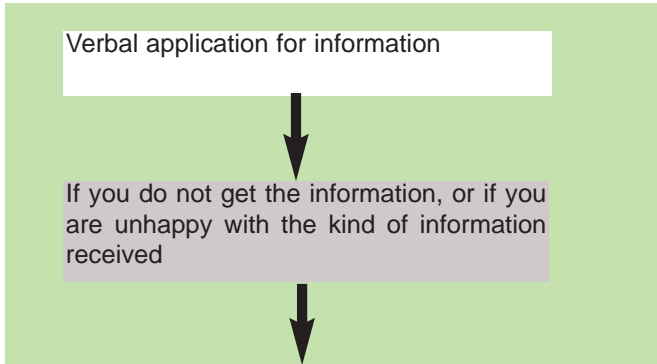
- All government institutions (Union Parishad, Government Line Agencies e.g., Ministries) and NGOs who receive government or foreign funding have now the obligation to disclose/share all of their information either pro-actively or on-demand (Section 6[1], 2-Kha)
 - o Pro-actively means that information needs to be disclosed whether somebody is asking for it or not. E.g. the budget of the Union Parishad has to be shared with the public through a permanent budget board (section 6)
 - o On-demand means that information needs to be disclosed if a person asks/applies for that information. E.g. the minutes of a Union Parishad meeting or the stock register of a Union Health and Family Welfare Centre (section 8)
- There are only a few exceptions such as information on pending criminal investigations that does not need to be disclosed (section 7-da)
- If an institution fails to provide information the applicant can appeal and complain. The institution will have to pay a fine for not providing the information or providing it with delay (section 24, 25, 27)

Local Government (Union Parishad) Act, 2009

- Any citizen of Bangladesh has the right to get any information from the Union Parishad (Section 78[1])

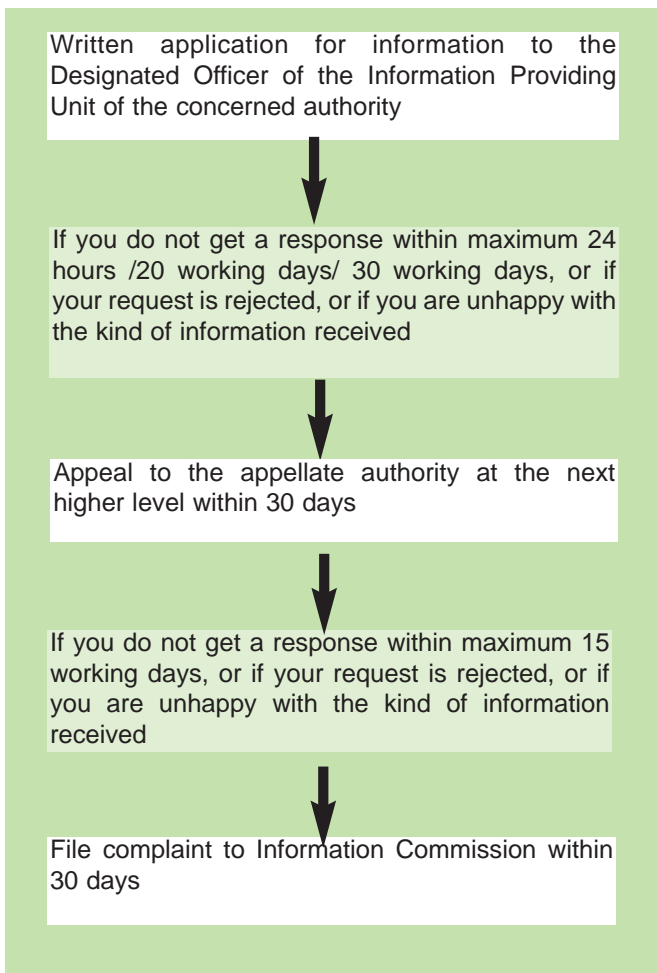
Note 4C: Presentation on process of accessing information

Option 1:



Note for trainer:
Explain that wherever possible a confrontational approach to accessing information should be avoided. Therefore, if ever possible option 1 should be used in trying to access information.

Option 2:



Note for trainer:
24 hours is for information relating to the life and death, arrest and release from jail of any person.
20 days for applications for information which concern only one unit or authority
30 days for applications for information which concern more than one unit or authority.

Note for trainer:
Examples of concerned appellate authorities:

- ◆ Union Parishad → Upazila Nirbhai Officer
- ◆ Union Health and Family Welfare Centers → Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer.
- ◆ Office of the Sub-Assistant Agricultural Extension Officer → Office of the Upazila Agricultural Officer
- ◆ Office of the Upazila Primary Education Officer → Office of the District Primary Education Officer

Session 5:

How to access information?

Objective of session:

- ◆ Participants know how to prepare and file an RTI application

Duration: 1 hour 45 minutes

Method:

- ◆ Presentation
- ◆ Group work
- ◆ Plenary discussion

Training material:

- ◆ Poster paper with objectives of session 5
- ◆ Poster paper displaying the RTI application form
- ◆ Sample RTI application
- ◆ Application form for each participant
- ◆ Appeal form for each participant

Training aids:

Basket, 30 plain sheets of A5 paper, poster papers, permanent markers, flipchart board with stand, if available, otherwise rope and masking tape to hang poster papers

Process:

Step 1: (5min)

Share what the session is about including its objectives with the help of a poster paper .

Step 2: (10 min)

The trainer asks the participant to think about one major individual problem/issue which they would like to overcome through accessing information. She/he asks the participants that each participant will be given a piece of paper (A5 size paper). The co-trainer supplies the paper to all participants and places a basket in the middle of the circle of participants.

The trainer asks the participants to write their problem on the supplied piece of paper and put it in the basket. She/he reminds the participants that they should come up with their individual problem/issue therefore they should not share it with others.

In case some participants cannot write, the trainer, co-trainer or another participant should help with writing the problem on the provided piece of paper.

¹³ Note 5A: Objectives of session 5

Step 3: (5 min)

When all participants have put their pieces of paper in the basket, the trainer invites two volunteers to take the pieces of paper out of the basket and read them to the participants. The trainer asks the volunteers to keep the pieces of paper with similar problems on separate piles.

Step 4: (5 min)

The trainer counts the piles with the different problem statements and notes the score against each problem statement on a poster paper. She/he asks the participants to choose the three most important problems on the basis of the scores and whether they want to address these by using the RTI Act.

Step 5: (5 min)

The trainer asks who among the participants would volunteer to submit an RTI application for the three problems chosen. Once three volunteers are selected (one for each problem) the participants are told that they will later on draft the respective RTI application in groups.

Step 6: (5 min)

The trainer presents the application process as laid out in the RTI Act 2009 using the prepared poster presentation¹⁴.

Step 7: (5min)

The trainer shows the blank RTI application form¹⁵ to the participants prepared on a poster paper. She/he asks a participant to read out the different points in the format. After that the trainer should verify with the participants whether they have understood the different points.

Step 8: (10 min)

The trainer explains how to write an RTI application¹⁶ with the use of the note with tips on how to write a RTI application and the sample application¹⁷ prepared on a poster paper. She/he distributes the blank form as well as the tips on how to write a RTI application and the sample application to each of the participants.

The trainer asks whether the participants have any further questions and comments.

¹⁴ Note 5B: Poster presentation on "Application process under the RTI Act 2009"

¹⁵ Note 5C: RTI application form

¹⁶ Note 5D: Tips on how to write a RTI application

¹⁷ Note 5E: Sample RTI application

Step 9: (30 min)

The trainer divides the participants into three groups of equal size. Each group is assigned to deal with one of the three problems identified and the concerned volunteer is asked to join the respective groups.

The trainer explains that the task of the groups is to prepare a RTI application as per the given format on the chosen problem within 30 minutes.

The co-trainer ensures supply of brown sheets and markers. Both trainers will move around the groups and support them to correctly prepare the RTI application.

Step 10: (20 min)

Each group is asked to present their RTI application in plenary. After each presentation the trainer and other group members will provide their comments for improving the RTI application. Based on the comments the presenter will make the necessary changes in the application if necessary.

Step 11: (5 min)

The trainer reminds the participants that if they do not get a response from the concerned authority within the stipulated time (24 hours/ 20 working days/ 30 working days depending on the kind of information sought), or their application is rejected or if they are not happy with the information provided, that they can appeal to a higher authority within 30 days. He/she distributes a copy of the RTI appeal form¹⁸ to those participants who are interested.

¹⁸ Note 5F: RTI appeal form

Notes for trainers - Session 5

Note 5A: Objectives of session 5

Participants know how to prepare and file an RTI application.

Note 5B: Poster presentation on "Application Process under the RTI Act 2009"

1. Decide the information to be requested;
2. Identify the Authority and the Information Providing Unit (IPU) from which the information is to be sought;
3. If feasible verbally request for the information at the identified Information Providing Unit;
4. If information is not received based on verbal request or it is not feasible to verbally request for information: draft the application as per the given format/form. In case the form is not available the application can be drafted on a plain piece of paper;
5. The RTI application can be given in person or sent by registered post or by fax or e-mail to the Designated Officer of the Information Providing Unit. In case you don't know who the Designated Officer is you could either call the office of the IPU or mention "Designated Officer" on the envelope and send it to the office concerned.
6. A fee has to be sent along with the application. After submitting the application along with the fee, collect a receipt (in case the fee is paid in cash). While submitting the application, keep a photocopy with you and get it stamped by the receiving authority along with the date. This will help in case of appeal or complaint.

Note 5C: RTI application form

Schedule
Form KA
(Rule 3)

Application for Information

- 1) Name of applicant :
Father's name :
Mother's name :
Present Address :
Permanent Address :
Fax, Email, Telephone and Mobile Phone Number (if available)
- 2) What type of information (use additional paper if needed):
- 3) In what form do you want to receive the information (printed/photocopy/ written / email/ fax/CD or other):
- 4) Name and address of information receiver:
- 5) If applicable name and address of the collaborator:
- 6) Name and address of the information providing authority:
- 7) Date of application :

Applicant's Signature

Note 5D: Tips on how to write a RTI application (for trainers' reference and handout)

- ◆ Think carefully about what you will do with the information you want to apply for.
- ◆ Specify the information request as much as possible e.g. number of tube-wells supplied from first July 2009 to December 2009, list of recipients with address, mode of delivery etc.
- ◆ Decide on the form of information according to the type of information. Example:
 - Act, rules circular, booklet, master role, procedure, guideline etc.: photocopy
 - book of accounts, register: inspection
 - UP development project for a certain time frame: written
 - Audio-Video materials: CD or DVD
 - If the applicant can not determine the form then better to mention: in written and attested
- ◆ Information applied for should be verifiable.

Note 5E: Sample RTI application

1. Applicant's Name : Md Shamsuzzaman
Father's Name : Md Nasiruddin
Mother's Name : Mrs Sanwara Begum
Present Address : Bazarpur, P/O: Hat Ramchandrapur, Ward #: 7,
Union:Parila, Upazila paba, P/S: Paba,
District: Rajshahi
Permanent Address : As above
Fax, E-mail, telephone, and mobile nos. (if available) 0171123 4320

2. Description of information (use extra paper if required):
 - a) Please give a list of all the works related to repair and maintenance of earthen roads carried out in my area (Ward # 7) since 1st July 2008 till December 2009. The list should contain the name of the work, Work Order No, actual date of start, actual date of completion, amount paid or payable, status of work, name of head of PIC/SIC, list of PSC/SSC committee, and mode of improvement of those roads.
 - b) In each of the above works, please give a list of the earthen roads (mentioning from which house holding no. to which house holding no. was it repaired), which were repaired under those work, the length of repair and average width of repair in each earthen roads.
 - c) For each of these works, please mention what was the guarantee clause, if any and whether it has been invoked so far.
 - d) After you have prepared the above information, I would like to inspect your measurement books and work order registers related to these works to ensure that you have given complete information.
3. In which form is information sought: (printed/photocopy/ Written/e-mail/fax/CD or any other method):
 1. In Writing 2. Photocopy 3. Inspection
4. Name and Address of recipients of Information:
Md Moniruzzaman, C/O: Md Nasiruddin. Bazarpur, P/O: Hat Ramchandrapur, Ward #: 7, Union: Parila, Upazila paba, P/S: Paba, District: Rajshahi
5. Where applicable assistant's Name and Address: Kamal Uddin, Bazarpur, P/O: Hat Ramchandrapur, Ward #:7, Union: Parila, Upazila Paba, P/S: Paba, District: Rajshahi
6. Name and address of the Authority providing information: Parila Union Parishad.
7. Date of application: 18.02.2010

Applicant's Signature

Note 5F: RTI appeal form

Form GA (Rule 6) Appeal

- 1) Name of appellant and address (best way of communication):
- 2) Date of appeal:
- 3) Copy of the "order" against which this appeal is made (if available)
- 4) Name of the person who issues the 'order' against which this appeal is made and description of the order (if available):
- 5) Brief description of the appeal:
- 6) Reason for grievance against the 'order' (brief description):
- 7) Justification/basis of the expected answer:
- 8) Certification by the appellant:
- 9) Any other information that the appellant is willing to submit to the appealing authority

Signature of the appellant

Session 6:

Concluding Session

Objective of session:

- ◆ Development of an action plan
- ◆ Participants are able to explain what they have learnt from the workshop and come up with ideas on how they plan to use the RTI in the future

Duration: 35 minutes

Method:

- ◆ Plenary discussion

Training materials:

- ◆ Template of action plan

Training aids:

Poster papers, permanent markers, flipchart board with stand, if available, otherwise rope and masking tape to hang poster papers

Process:

Step 1: (5min)

Share what the session is about including its objectives.

Step 2: (5 min)

The trainer asks the three volunteers whether they are still interested and willing to submit the RTI applications developed in session 5. If this is not the case new volunteers need to be identified.

Step 3: (5 min)

The trainer mentions that while submitting the RTI application, this should be done with due respect for the person to whom the application is submitted. The applicant should not adopt a confrontational attitude. See in regard to this also the note for trainers ¹⁹.

¹⁹ Note 6A: Possibility of conflict because of the application submission

Step 4: (10 min)

The trainer hangs the empty action plan format²⁰ and explains that the participants should now decide on the next steps on how to use the inputs received from this training.

The trainer can use the activity of finalizing the RTI applications to show how the action plan should be filled in.

The trainer then asks the participants:

- ◆ What further activities (steps) would you want to undertake?
- ◆ Who will be responsible for these activities?
- ◆ Who will support the responsible person?
- ◆ In what time frame are you planning to do these activities?

While the trainer asks these questions and participants give their answers the co-trainers fills in the action plan.

Step 5: (5 min)

The trainer asks at 3-5 participants to mention a major learning from the training. He/she also asks how this learning will be put to use.

Step 6: (5 min)

The trainer asks a senior member from among the participants to thank everyone and bring the training to an end.

Notes for trainers - Session 6

Note 6A: Possibility of conflict because of the application submission

The organization conducting the RTI training for communities should be aware that applying for information under the RTI Act 2009 may have repercussions for the applicant. It is therefore important that the organization does not force any trainees to submit an application. The organization should emphasize that the whole community should support the applicant throughout the process. The organization conducting the RTI training should also consider providing support as a follow-up to the training.

²⁰ Note 6B: Template for action plan

Note 6B: Template for action plan (filled in example)

Activity	Responsible Persons		Timeframe Start date End date	Comments
	Main responsible persons	Supporting person		
Finalise the RTI applications	- Sharifiquil - Halim - kusum	- Aneela - Lakhshmi - Tahsina	21/08/2010 - 15/09/2010	Supporting person will help to write the application
Submission of RTI application	- Sharifiquil - Halim - Metali	- Halim - Tahsina - Aneela	16/09/2010 - 20/09/2010	Supporting person will accompany the applicant and help to submit the application
Inform the rest of the community about the RTI Act	- Salma - Salam	- Lakhshmi - Metali - Salma	30/03/10 - 07/04/2010	Prepare inputs, conduct community meeting
Inform community about the results of the application	- Sharifiquil - Aneela - Lakhshmi	- Halim - Tahsina - Metali - Bokkor (NGO)		Once the information is received the date for sharing the results will be defined.



 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



Canadian International
Development Agency Agence canadienne de
développement international



**World Bank
Institute**

