

# **Educational Tools and Methods for Beginning Refugee Farmers**

**Hugh Joseph  
ISED Solutions  
Third Sector New England  
Beginning Farmer and Rancher  
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# Beginning Farmer Incubators

- Defined by the National Incubator Farm Training Initiative (NIFTI): “A farm incubator project is a land-based multi-grower project that provides training and technical assistance to aspiring and beginning farmers.”
- At least 150-200 land-based incubators nationally (NIFTI).
- Varying levels of development and diverse new farmer trainees.
- Many components – land access, production, marketing, enterprise development, T&TA.





# Incubator T&TA

- T&TA - key element of programs.
- Typically provide training / education and technical assistance (hands on, often 1-1).
- Should be tailored to beginning farmers' capacities and priorities.
- Also should reflect purposes of the incubators.



# T&TA for US-born audiences

- US-born BFs typically have English fluency and literacy, high school education or beyond.
- T&TA essentially reflects English language and written content.
- Spoken: Lectures, discussions, AV / media.
- Written: Project materials, books, articles, manuals, online written content, etc.

# INCUBATOR T&TA

- Scope, content and quality varies widely.
- Training: Some have well designed curricula – clear objectives, good lesson plans, tailored content.
- Diverse resources available to use or adopt.
- Increasing online access allows sharing, multiple users of same resources.



# REFUGEE INCUBATORS

Typical of refugee incubator participants:

- Non-English-speaking
- Non-literate, at least in English
- Limited education
- Cultural differences; acculturation challenges
- Different and diverse agricultural heritages
- Very limited resources for farming
- Urban-based; other resettlement challenges

# T&TA for Refugees

## **Written:**

- English materials not useful except for ESL
- Content of such materials usually not appropriate for levels of understanding, even if translation used

## **Spoken:**

- Usually by English-speaking trainers, not bilingual
- Typically requires interpreters
- Exchanges / discussion more difficult



# T&TA for Refugees

## Non-written resources:

Oral communications

Videos

PowerPoints

Photos, drawings, other visuals

Hands-on demonstration

Props, classroom and field tools

# What IS T&TA?

Not just content, no matter how delivered. It combines:

- Overall curriculum / Lesson plans
- Guidance for providers / trainers (ToT)
- Content for audience(s)
- Provider facilitation or instructional content
- Methods for delivery and engagement of participants
- Communications tools and techniques (language)
- Evaluation and feedback



# Constraints to effective T&TA for Refugees

- Instructional competencies and credentials
- Appropriate content for recent refugees
- Provider facilitation materials
- Guidance resources for trainers
- Delivery and communications skills
- Interpreters
- Cultural appreciation and competencies
- Alternatives resources for refugees

# Our EE Project

## Educational Tools and Methods for Beginning Refugee Farmers

**Participants:** 20-25 refugee-serving incubators

**Developers:** 8 organizations

**Users / Evaluators:** 20+ incubators

**Major partners:**

- New Entry Sustainable Farming Project / NIFTI
- International Rescue Committee's 'New Roots'



# Project Core Objectives

- Develop coordination teams
- Support a Community of Practice (CoP) for development
- Assessment - Review existing curricula and gaps
- Build instructional and curriculum development skills
- Develop new and adapted curricula
- Pilot test resources and instructional methods
- Dissemination

# Educational Tools and Methods for Beginning Refugee Farmers

## Outcomes and Deliverables

### Curriculum development

- Audience appropriate content / tools
- Instructor / provider content and facilitation guidance
- Resource library for content development
- Pilot testing and feedback



# Educational Tools and Methods for Beginning Refugee Farmers

Overall T&TA curriculum

- Overall objectives / outcomes
- Courses / classes / workshops / modules
- Content for farmers
- Instructional / facilitation materials for providers
- Training of trainers guidance / skills

# Educational Tools and Methods for Beginning Refugee Farmers

Skills and capacity development:

- Instructional skills – how to teach
- Curriculum and lesson design / planning
- Instructor content development
- Communications skills for non-English low-education audiences
- Working with interpreters
- Farmer engagement – participation



# Relevance to teaching literate English-speaking audiences

- Do you have instructional skills / credentials for adult education?
- Are you experienced with curriculum planning and design?
- Do you know your audience's comprehension levels?
- Are your materials appropriate to audience education levels?

# Relevance to teaching literate audiences

- Are you talking at audience comprehension level?
- Is content suited to type of farming, level of development, etc.?
- Is your facilitation material designed for your audience?
- Are additional resources tailored to audience needs and interests and capacities?



# Plain Language

- Most farmers have literacy and comprehension levels below the typical agriculture literature.
- Plain language is a way of organizing and presenting information so that it makes sense and is easy to read for the intended audience.
- Mostly developed & prompted by AHEC health communications programs.
- Guidance easily found online, but recommend training to understand it. It is a skill.

# Plain Language

- Plain language (also called Plain English) is communication your audiences can understand the first time they read or hear it.
- Includes wording, sentence structure, design.
- Less technical jargon, shorter words and sentences, larger text sizes.
- Integrates graphics; other visual images.
- Encourages engagement / exchange.