

# Training Session

## What we did

The UCCE Training Session aims to introduce field staff to User-Centred Community Engagement, the methods involved, and to provide hands-on experience to implement the methodology. A detailed guide that was used in the training can be found [here](#).

During the UCCE Ethiopia Pilot the Eclipse Experience team trained field staff, which consisted of two WASH Officers, one WASH Manager, one MEAL Manager and five data collectors. The training was planned to take one full day but an additional half day was added after the Interactive Digital Surveys for additional Co-Creation Session practice.

## What we learned

### **Introduction of novel concepts in the training was not accessible enough to the project team**

The first section of the UCCE training is dedicated to introducing the project team to new concepts such as user-centred design and to the different components of the User-Centred Community Engagement methodology. Some of the content covered in this section was very new to the team and required more time and care on the part of trainers to introduce, which we didn't account for in the training plan during the Ethiopia pilot. As a result, the introduction section felt too rushed and too heavy to allow the team build a good initial understanding of UCCE objectives and components and user-centred design approaches in general. In interviews at the end of the pilot, several team members shared that they at first struggled with the content covered during the introduction but said that these became much clearer once they moved on to the hands-on practice components of the training.

### **Language barriers posed a challenge during the training**

English language skills varied significantly across the project team and the Eclipse team did not speak the language of the project team (Somali). This was a big challenge to manage, and had implications for our ability to deliver an interactive, hands-on training that included a mix of conceptual information and activity-related instructions.

## Significant differences in project team skills & experience made it difficult to manage learning outcomes

Project team's skills and level of experience varied significantly as well. Some team members had previous experience in conducting surveys and community engagement activities with crisis-affected people. Others didn't. Data collectors also lacked training in child participation approaches. The differences in competencies meant that we had to adjust the initial training plan by extending the practice components for both Interactive Digital Surveys and Co-Creation Sessions to make sure that all staff arrived at a comparable level of understanding of how to implement these components of the UCCE methodology.

## Hands-on practice of core components was crucial for learning

Hands-on practice was crucial to the project team's learning of UCCE concepts. The concept of Co-Creation Sessions was especially difficult to grasp at first. Extended training on conducting the Interactive Digital Surveys and the additional training for Co-Creation Sessions were vital to the success of the training.

## Additional Co-Creation Session training was necessary for building facilitators' confidence

In an effort to move from an 'instructional', top-down training atmosphere to a more discussion-based training, we introduced several practical components structured as 'role play' activities. The concept of 'role play' was difficult to explain and the project team found it challenging to imagine themselves as other people (i.e., as children or caregivers from the community). This was particularly difficult during the Co-Creation Sessions practice. After running the full UCCE training as initially planned, it became clear that the project team required additional training to confidently run Co-Creation Sessions with the community. The Eclipse team developed and implemented an additional training session that was held after the Interactive Digital Surveys and the day before the Co-Creation Sessions started in context. In order to support the role-play, we created specific roles for the project team members to follow during an end-to-end run through of a children's Co-creation Session. We created 6 fictional user characters using actual survey findings for the Project Team to play. For the characters we defined names, age, specific problems and causes, and specific ideas. We also asked team members to come up with one problem and one idea for their character during the mock session. While many team members followed the characters only loosely and some didn't at all, introducing this additional structure worked very well for facilitating a detailed walk-through of the session. By the end of the activity, the team members were fully equipped to run the Co-Creation Sessions on their own.

## **Mentoring for Interactive Digital Surveys was useful in building staff ability to implement UCCE autonomously**

The data collectors felt that “mentoring” support, i.e, trainers and senior local staff observing and providing feedback on their actions, during the first two days of Interactive Digital Surveys deployment was useful to build their ability and confidence to conduct the surveys. This sentiment was echoed by the SCUK Humanitarian WASH Advisor present during the pilot, who suggested mentoring or ‘mock’ components generally work well in other types of training he was familiar with.

## **What this means for UCCE development**

### **Tailor training materials to meet the needs of different project team members**

Training materials should be better tailored to the needs of different team members to streamline the UCCE training, minimise information overload and help different team members focus on information and tasks that are most important for them. For example, the data collectors and facilitators should be trained only on the core components of UCCE (Interactive Digital Surveys & Co-Creation Sessions). This training should have a strong focus on hands-on practice of implementing the core components. The technical staff training (e.g., the WASH team), on the other hand, should include more background and conceptual information, including a more illustrative section on user-centred design.

### **Include more detailed role-play scenarios in UCCE training**

Based on how helpful the role-play scenarios were for both the project team and the trainer's, these should be included in future trainings for hands-on practice of Co-Creation Sessions. The scenarios should include details such as name, age, problems with facilities, causes and ideas for each role. Each facilitator should practice a Problem Tree activity in a role-play setting at least once during training.

### **Extend hands-on practice for the Interactive Digital Surveys**

During the pilot, we spent more time than originally planned on practicing Interactive Digital Surveys with the project team, which definitely paid off during the implementation of the surveys. Extended practice time for this UCCE component should be included in future trainings along with breaks between practice runs for Q&A. Trainers can also conduct one survey role play for the Project Team to set an example at the beginning of survey practice.

## Explore blended learning approaches to UCCE training

Explore blended learning approaches to allow field staff to study certain concepts and components of UCCE before the in-person training. One such approach could be a ‘flipped classroom’, where the project team go over selected training content in their own time and focus on group work and hands-on practice during the face-to-face training session. Their understanding of concepts introduced in self-study materials can be assessed online, and the in-person training can be further tailored to address any knowledge gaps.

## Develop a Training of Trainers model for UCCE

To support the scale-up of UCCE and address some of the challenges observed during the Ethiopia pilot, a ToT model should be developed that can be used to deliver UCCE training to different parts of a humanitarian organisation in a distributed manner. In such a model, Eclipse staff would train the humanitarian staff at the international HQ or country office level, who in turn would train technical staff at the field level, who would then be responsible for training data collectors/ facilitators in delivering the Interactive Digital Surveys and Co-Creation Sessions components of UCCE on the ground. This model would mitigate the challenges posed by the language barrier and ensure that the frontline staff receive sufficient training in their local language and do not require the presence of foreign trainers to pick up and implement UCCE.

## Explore establishing minimum skills requirements for UCCE implementers

From the start of this project it has been our aspiration to make UCCE accessible to all humanitarian staff regardless of their skills or abilities. While this remains the case, one question that came up during the Ethiopia pilot is whether it is necessary for data collectors/ facilitators who are often casual hires from the local population to have child participation training before implementing UCCE. While we have not seen substantial evidence of such necessity in our research, this question should be further explored with UCCE partners, along with feasible alternatives (e.g., including a child participation module in the UCCE training).

Additionally, if the data collectors/ facilitators are trained by trainers who do not speak the local language, their English language skills need to be assessed during recruitment. A minimum of B2 language competency should be required and C1 competency is recommended.

## Simplify UCCE guidance materials

UCCE guidance materials should be reviewed and simplified to make it more user-friendly and accessible for self-study. Whenever possible, it should also be provided in the language of the project team.

## Explore including mentoring and 'mock' components in UCCE training

This implication is based on feedback from both senior Save the Children staff and data collectors who found mentoring by technical staff very helpful during UCCE implementation. An alternative to mentoring could be including a 'mock' module where data collectors practice surveys and Co-Creation Sessions with members of the crisis-affected community. We used this approach in pilots in Iraq and Bangladesh but decided against it for the Ethiopia pilot due to ethical concerns. Further examination in collaboration with UCCE partners is required to make the final decision.