



Participatory
Action
Learning for
Sustainability

**Fun with
a Serious
Purpose**

**PALS Facilitation
Guide for GYEM
Ethiopia**

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This Facilitation Guide forms part of the Participatory Action Learning for Sustainability (PALS) Curriculum developed for the Gender and Youth Empowerment in Horticulture Markets (GYEM) programme implemented in Ethiopia by SNV 2016-2019, funded by Comic Relief, UK.

The PALS Toolkit is based on piloting in Timret and Meki Batu Unions November 2016-December 2017. The overview outlines the principles, approach and recommendations in order to maximise contribution to:

- gender and youth empowerment for women and men
- outreach and upscaling to thousands of people involved in GYEM
- sustainability beyond the timeframe of the GYEM project.

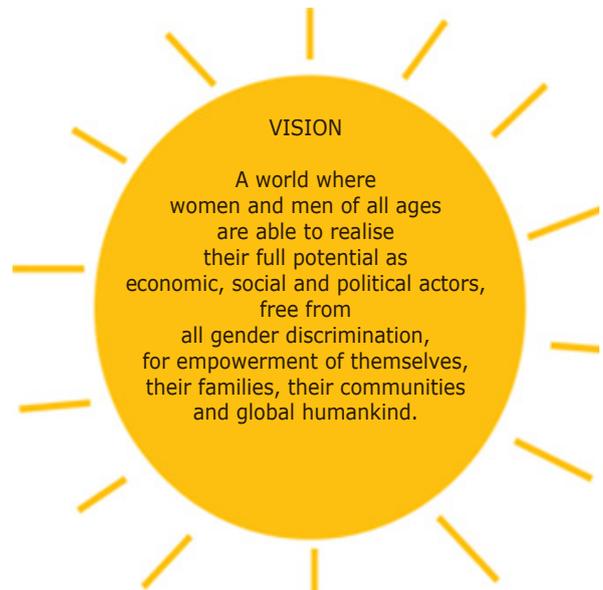
For further resources, update and contacts for GYEM Ethiopia see:

<https://palsethiopia.wordpress.com>

For further information on development and adaptations of PALS methodology globally see:

<http://www.gamechangenetwork.org>

NOTE: Ideally those implementing the Toolkit would receive community-based training from one of the implementing organisations and their champions and/or authors of this Toolkit.



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PALS facilitation: fun with a serious purpose

In PALS the aim is not just to teach a fixed set of diagram tools. It is to promote innovation and creativity of women and men farmers to vision, plan and improve their lives and livelihoods and catalyse a sustainable and self-upscaling community-led movement for development.

PALS follows established good practice in adult education and participatory facilitation. But PALS moves even further away from 'teaching mode' because the goal is not awareness-raising in the sense of conscientisation by outsiders, but to catalyse discussion, awareness and motivation 'from within' the participants themselves. The aim is to develop the capacity of all participants to make changes in their own lives and also become champions of change in their households and communities through inspiring others. This means:

- inspiring new visions for how things could be in a truly human world
- building creativity in diagramming and visual communication skills
- internalising participatory, listening and leadership skills of women and men
- creating new cultural forms with songs, art and theatre
- forming new friendships and networks between women and men, and across generational and ethnic barriers so that everyone respects everyone else as equal human beings.

Everyone can be a leader of change

Waiting for good leaders means development may never come. Even the best leaders are not able to fulfil expectations with the resources and human capacities they have.

If we want to advance, everyone must take responsibility for our own process. The first responsibility for action and change lies with the individual. But once a person is able to change themselves, through

planning and analysing progress on their own diagrams, then anyone can also become a leader of change helping others.

PALS promotes the leadership qualities of everyone in a change process. The methodology and facilitation techniques help women and men to identify their strengths, contributions and responsibilities. Confidence to talk and express opinions in front of others develops for everyone from the very first hour.

Group activities are designed to develop participatory listening skills to work collaboratively with others. This then is part of developing the skills and motivation for ownership of the process and widespread scaling up through peer training.

Action from Day 1

Every learning 'event' focuses on tangible actions for change that can be taken by individuals immediately, before waiting for other actions at group and institutional levels. The precise purpose of every session and tool in terms of these action outputs needs to be very clear from the beginning, and the main focus of the facilitator's introduction. These actions include immediate practical steps towards change once participants get home, learning and further development of the documentation in individual diaries, and peer sharing commitments.

It is important that time is always left to identify action implications of the discussion – shortening analysis of information and/or giving some tasks for homework where necessary.

Inclusion

PALS works with stakeholders at all levels. The main focus is development of capacities of the poorest and most vulnerable to promote their equitable participation in an inclusive development agenda. Work with the poorest and most vulnerable is generally a priority starting point to ensure that their interests are fully understood from the beginning and to strengthen their negotiating position at the start. These are also generally the people who have little option but to change in order to advance. Seeing these people develop and advance when they change gender relations is what persuades others to also change.



Box 1: PALS Facilitation: Underlying principles

- Everyone can be a leader of change
- Action from Day 1
- Inclusion
- Based on social justice, including gender and generational justice
- Change is fun
- Build new friendships, networks and leadership
- Focus on win-win
- Sustainability



Based on social justice, including gender and generational justice

Women's human rights in CEDAW, signed by Government of Ethiopia, together with the rights of children youth and the elderly, underpin the ways in which the process is designed, implemented and monitored. Strategies that promote social justice are strengthened. Strategies that work against the rights of women, youth and the elderly are not supported and attitudes and behaviours are progressively changed.

Gender change is rarely simple. Men as well as women often have justifiable reasons for acting the way they do because of contextual pressures. These need to be expressed and understood before they can be changed. Learning 'gender concepts' or developing gender mainstreaming indicators does not necessarily lead to real change in attitudes and behaviours in communities or organisations. Rather than 'teaching gender correctness' or 'conceptual clarity', in PALS common human rights principles for women as well as men are progressively internalised as 'normal' through fun processes so that over time they become the only 'natural' way of thinking and acting. Men as well as women realise that unless they change gender inequalities they are unlikely to achieve true human fulfilment in their lives.

CHANGE IS FUN

Having fun together gives spaces for men and women to relax, feel free and happy together as human beings as a necessary part of building the movement - removing the need for any imposition of 'political correctness'. Having fun is also a key element in sustainability of the process. People will only continue to use and share PALS with others if they enjoy being involved as well as finding it useful!!!

PALS uses songs, art and theatre to promote change. These often build on

existing forms. But they also question underlying assumptions on gender and other dimensions of inequality and subvert these into new ways of thinking and acting.

Build new friendships, networks and leadership

People should be continually mixing with new people or those they do not know so well – or even those they do not currently get on with so well, so they understand each other better.

Focus on win-win

PALS is also used with other better-off and more powerful private sector and institutional stakeholders to engage their energies, skills and resources for a sustainable pro-poor wealth creation process. It does not seek to displace traders and intermediaries, but to promote consensus and understanding of basic non-negotiable principles of equity as the basis for 'win-win' efficient strategies and transparent economic relationships which ultimately benefit everyone. It does not assume, but explicitly develops strategies for 'trickle-down' based on identification of self-interest at different levels, widening economic options and increasing bargaining power particularly those of the poorest and most vulnerable. Both the development of mutual understanding and communication between stakeholders, and the increased bargaining power of the most vulnerable stakeholders, then enables any inevitable conflicts of interest to be addressed in a much more constructive and equitable manner without undermining the sustainability of the economic activities themselves.

Sustainability

The focus throughout is on combining community ownership, pyramid peer upscaling with mainstreaming in development, private sector and government to integrate the methodology across other activities and trainings.

Workshop Facilitation

PALS requires a different facilitation style from what many people may be used to. Research has shown that people remember only a small amount of what they are told, even if they write things down. Even the best designed training kits or beautifully copied notes are often put aside and not consulted again once participants get back to their normal busy lives. What participants remember much more are messages they see in pictures and activities they have a chance to practice themselves hands-on during training.

In PALS, the best facilitation is 'from the back' where the facilitator empowers participants to express and facilitate themselves. Through encouraging participants to speak and asking only a few short targeted questions, good facilitation manages to arrive at a point where most of the important issues come from participants' own discussion. This requires very close observation of the process – who is and who is not talking and why – and encouraging people who lack confidence or hesitate to express certain views. The facilitator barely speaks and does not express their own opinion during the discussion. The facilitator's main task is to ensure that all voices are fairly heard, that discussion is not dominated by particular people, and to make space for a range of views to be expressed by participants themselves. The facilitator should not be frightened by silence, but give people time and space to reflect. Facilitator input should be through asking questions, e.g. on contradictions between different responses, to provoke discussion. Only in case of great difficulty when issues cannot be raised through other means the facilitator may discuss experience in other PALS processes from their own experience. This requires practice - and often a leap of faith to let things take their course - and is hard even for those trained in more conventional participatory awareness-raising techniques.

As far as possible every session and meeting should include a range of different elements to make the meeting lively and participatory, and also promote change and peer sharing. These elements are summarised in Box 2.

Everyone should have a voice. Always start each session/day with a participatory

pairwise recapitulation of the previous session, or questions on perceptions and expectations of the meeting while others are arriving (See Box 2). Pair discussions enable participants to start focusing on the issues as soon as they arrive, so that they are not sitting around with nothing to do while others are still arriving. They also allow for the fact that, even with the best will in the world, the reality is that not everyone will be able to arrive exactly on time. It is important not to penalise people who justifiably come a bit late on occasion. At the same time, if those who come on time are kept waiting, they are less likely to come on time next time. So the pair discussion is a useful way of overcoming this dilemma and reinforcing discipline. Although initially time consuming, the discussions should not be rushed. The participatory skills and discipline learned, and friendly understanding developed, through continual repetition of this exercise are as important as the content of the tools. As people get used to having these pair discussions at the beginning of each training they will go much more smoothly in subsequent sessions. Experience shows a very clear difference between those sessions where pair discussions have taken place and those where normal rounds of individual introductions were done because of a perceived lack of time. This is the case at all levels: in communities and also senior levels in institutions. The rest of the session is much smoother and more lively because people are already confident and participating. Pair discussions are also a very important part of the participatory skills training and network development. They help the facilitator to get a good sense of peoples' initial level of understanding and the language they use, and to observe the dynamics of the group and make any last minute minor adjustments to facilitation accordingly.

Feedback should always start from the back or with minority participants (e.g. men first if they are poor and fewer in number) to show respect for those who are likely to be less confident and to promote inclusion. This means those who are larger in number or more likely to be dominant have to listen and respond to others in their presentations/suggestions.

Gender justice is an integral part of analysis and underlies strategies at all levels – and over time becomes the 'natural' way of thinking and acting.

Box 2: Suggested elements of sessions

Every session will ideally have the following elements:

Pairwise and/or pyramid discussion

The PALS pair discussions are extremely important and replace the normal individual introductions, and will also recapitulate on previous experience in PALS and cover expectations. They enable any session to start exactly on time with a fun activity, where those who are late miss out on the interesting discussion, but not on the substance of the training. It is also important for people in training, and in groups, to listen and learn from each other and to speak up for each other.

As people arrive they are asked to sit in pairs with people they do not know so well and discuss something relevant to the session – often a recapitulation of the previous session and/or experience with homework and/or expectations of the coming session. People are told that each person will feedback what their partner said – not their own views, so they have to listen carefully without writing down.

Depending on numbers of participants, pairs may be joined into larger groups of 6-10 people after 5-10 minutes to identify and feedback 3-5 key points to the plenary before proceeding to the main content of the session.

Formal start of the session

- PALS song as energiser and to reinforce what was learned in previous sessions
- explanation and clarifying the purpose of the tool or exercise

Main Tool and Discussion

- individual and/or group work
- plenary feedback and discussion
- discussion of issues in pyramid peer sharing

Brief facilitator wrap-up

This should be very brief and limited only to the main points – in good facilitation nearly everything should already have been said by participants. A main purpose of the wrap up is to explain the next session and homework.

Homework

All sessions have homework in the form of implementing immediate change actions, reviewing and refining diagrams and pictorial manual for sharing with others, sharing with neighbours and friends. Sometimes working with others to develop logos, songs or theatre.

On a practical level there are a few basic guidelines to support the above aims - see Box 3.

The facilitator should be seated on the same level as the participants, and whenever possible at the back. The facilitator should not touch the marker but ask others to draw. The main space that can be used by the facilitator to express their own views is when they have 5-10 minutes for final wrap-up: they summarise the conclusions on ways forward based on consensus reached on social justice, and point to some issues that may not yet have been resolved or raised - particularly contradictions between what participants say they want and what they don't want (eg men liking power but not wanting responsibility). If some participants become very emotional because of their experience they should be asked if they wish to stay or need to go to see someone outside the group who can help them and come back when they are ready.

In group discussions introduce some sort of tool such as a stick or a banana to represent a microphone. It is only the person holding this tool who is allowed to talk. It is then possible to ensure that

everyone has a turn to hold the tool, and limits on the number of times or length of time anyone can hold it can also be introduced.

All participants and all responses should be applauded and respected through a culturally relevant show of appreciation following each presentation. Make it clear to everyone that everyone's word is to be valued and respected, particularly the views of those who may be more disadvantaged than others in the group. This includes women, people who cannot read and write and also men if they are in a minority and not in leadership positions. No one should feel they cannot ask questions or say things which they feel - provided this is done in a real spirit of wanting to understand and does not undermine the free expression of others.

At the end make sure everyone has contributed: at the end of each stage anyone who has not spoken or drawn on the diagram must be given the 'microphone' or pen and encouraged to comment/draw on the diagram.



Box 3: Practical Guidelines

Inclusive facilitation from the back'

- Make space for most of the main points to be made by participants themselves.
- Be seated on the same level as participants.
- Don't be afraid of silence.
- Don't hold the marker.
- Save main points for a succinct 5-10 minute wrap up referring to points made by participants.

Think strategically about group composition

- Group exercises should aim to extend peoples' networks and develop leadership capacity as well as providing a space for free and open discussion.
- In some cases it will be best to put people together with people with same ideas, skills, background and interests eg women with women/men with men, people in the same economic activity. This will enable open discussion and build confidence.
- In other cases putting very different people together – women with men, very poor with very rich – will open minds to new ideas, build understanding across social barriers, develop new networks and be a valuable learning process for all.

Make sure seating arrangements are conducive to participation

- People should not be sitting in rows like school. There should be space for people to easily come up to the front to draw on plenary diagrams. There should be enough spaces at the sides and corners of the room for group work and for people to move around freely.
- No one should ever be sitting with nothing to do
- Participants are very busy people with many other things to do with their time. They should never be left sitting not knowing what to do. The facilitator needs to be constantly aware which people finish early and which people need more time. Those who finish early can either be given some ideas of how to develop their diagrams further. Or they can be asked to help others as part of the consolidation of their own skills and training experience.

Everyone's voice is heard, listened to and applauded

- Make it clear to everyone that everyone's word is to be valued, particularly the views of those who may be more disadvantaged than others in the group. This includes women, illiterate people and also men if they are in a minority and not in leadership positions. Feedback should always start from the back or with minority participants so that those who are normally less articulate and outspoken are listened to first – and given the necessary support to give them confidence to speak.
- After each presentation or contribution there should be a culturally appropriate form of acknowledgement and applause. This not only reinforces respect, but also acts as a break for thought and energiser.

Passing the stick

- Introduce some sort of tool to represent a microphone - like an actual microphone, a stick, or some groups prefer a banana or other object to represent a microphone. It is only the person holding this tool who is allowed to talk. It is then possible to ensure that everyone has a turn to hold the stick and limits on the numbers of time or length of time anyone can hold it can also be introduced.

Make sure everyone has contributed

- At the end of group discussions, and where appropriate at the end of plenaries, anyone who has not spoken must be given the microphone and asked if they would like to say something.

Box 4: Facilitation checklist

Organisation and flow of the session

- Did people arrive early? Were they sitting waiting or were they given something useful to do?
- Did people arrive late? Were they welcomed? Was this used as an opportunity to reinforce the facilitation skills of the participants?
- Was the finishing point of the session agreed at the beginning?
- Did the session start with some sort of pairwise recap to energise people? To feedback on homework from the previous session?
- Was there a song at the beginning and/or end to reinforce learning and teambuilding?
- Were there clear action outputs for participants to implement?
- Was there homework?

Participation

- Was the seating arrangement suitable for people to move around and come up to the front?
- Was group formation varied and appropriate? To introduce people to new friends? To enable people to share ideas with soulmates? To promote communication between people from different backgrounds?
- Did the facilitator make sure everyone participated equally in group discussions? Did everyone draw?
- Did the facilitator encourage everyone to participate in plenary discussions? Particularly women and people from the back?
- Was anyone left with nothing to do? What did the facilitator do to avoid this?

Content presentation

- Was the purpose of the tool or exercise explained?
- Did the facilitator explain through questioning the participants?
- Where was the facilitator sitting? Did they hold the pen?
- Did the facilitator mainly present their own opinions and point of view, or were they able to make sure their points were heard from the participants themselves?
- Was the facilitator wrap up clear and concise? Or did they talk for too long?

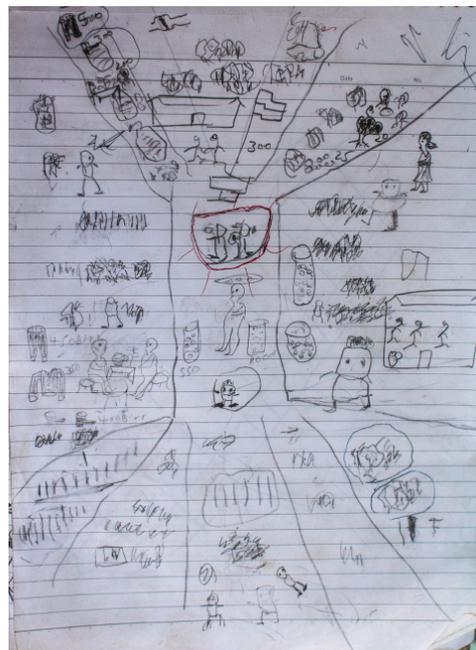
Change is fun: challenging culture

Part of the fun element in PALS is the development of visual creativity through drawing and diagrams as a liberating experience. What is required in PALS are not fine art paintings, but simple symbolic representations. Individual drawing can be both liberating and confidence-building. Collective drawing can be great fun and very useful in team-building. Within about 10 minutes, left alone with friends to gain confidence, most people will be happily drawing, even if they have never held a pen before or say they cannot draw. The facilitator should not touch the marker – participants should do all drawings themselves in order to develop skills and

increase confidence and ownership.

In addition to drawing, most sessions should start and/or end with some culturally appropriate event such as a song or a dance which reinforces the basic philosophy and gender justice principles of the process. As with drawing, the aim is not a polished theatre to raise awareness, but to directly engage participants in identifying and rehearsing changes. Songs and drama are used to subvert existing cultural stereotypes, explore changes and experiment with different, new ways of doing things in future. In PALS there are no professional actors or singers, no one leads and everyone participates:

**EVERYONE CAN BE AN ARTIST, ACTOR
AND SONGWRITER AND HAVE FUN WITH
CHANGE.**



Box 5: Encouraging Drawing

Why drawing?

- Clarification of thoughts and concepts
- Clearer communication and visual impact of ideas and concepts
- Possibility of fitting in more information in a smaller space to examine the relation between different elements
- Inclusion of people who cannot read and write - they are often better at symbol drawing than people with higher levels of formal education

Drawing the first Road Journey

- Where people are not even used to holding the pen, it is a good idea to start with the road journey tool discussed in the following section.
- The first circle will be quite large and their hand may shake. Reassure them that this is quite normal and that this always happens. Many other people have gone through this stage, but if they persevere with drawing it will become much easier, and then it is even a short step to doing numbers and eventually learning to write.
- The second circle should be easier. Then the straight lines come more quickly. By this stage the participant should be reasonably confident drawing.

Developing the first symbols

- The real next test comes with the symbols to put in the circles. Explain that now they have drawn circles and lines. All drawings are just combinations of circles and lines – long ones short ones, squishy ones, bent ones etc. So how would they start to draw a symbol for their activity?
- Continually probe to ask people how you know that what they have drawn is what they mean. For example initially a pig may just be a circle, but it needs four legs, it also needs a curly tail so we know it's a pig and not a goat, it also needs something to show whether it is a local or exotic pig, male or female, fat or thin etc.
- By this time people are generally laughing and having fun. Then continue this probing for all subsequent drawings till they are confident and making these sorts of distinctions on their own.

Drawing charades

- Ask everyone to think of a concept and draw this on a piece of paper. One person is then selected to present their drawing. They hold it up and other participants are given one question each to guess what the drawing means. At the end participants then give some suggestions on how the drawing could be made clearer.

A key factor is whether the facilitators are themselves comfortable with drawing and convinced of its various advantages even for people who can write - that is absolutely essential for any PALS facilitator and may require practice.

It is important to make the process fun, encourage people to have 'serious play' and explain that drawing is a fun means of expression which anyone can do - we are not wanting artistic drawings just symbols which others can understand. Some tips are given in Box 4.

Drawing

Diagrams are becoming increasingly important in a fast-moving world. Diagrams provide a sophisticated and entertaining way of presenting very complex information which might take several pages to describe in words. Information graphics, concept mapping and graphic design are used in many organisations from the boardrooms of multinational companies and international aid agencies to lecture theatres of academic institutions. Diagramming is a key element in creative and lateral thinking required for innovation. Systems and information graphics are much better at showing and analysing interrelations and complexity than words. Students in tertiary as well as secondary education learn to use concept maps and 'sketch-noting' as essential skills to clarify and speed up the process of learning, analysing and remembering information. Communication through diagrams has become an essential presentational skill with the advent of Powerpoint and developments in computer diagramming techniques.

Although diagramming does not necessarily use drawing, drawing increases both the visual impact and also conceptual clarity on diagrams. Drawing has often been dismissed as 'something for children', to be forgotten for 'grown-ups'. However scientific research shows that drawing uses a different side of the brain to verbal language, and is linked to development of spatial intelligence. Drawing has also long been part of counselling practice to open up unconscious and hidden thoughts and judgements – an essential part of examining and changing our own attitudes and behaviours. It is also an established part of teambuilding processes to develop spontaneity and encourage free and open discussion of ideas – including sensitive issues which may be hidden or avoided through using words.

Importantly drawing and diagrams are also the most accessible form of communication for people who have not had the opportunity of formal education. People who cannot read and write are often better at expressing themselves through drawing than people who have less patience to learn to draw because they have other more familiar options. People with little or no literacy and children can confidently explain their

diagrams to policymakers. Even first drawings often have a visual simplicity and impact which is very powerful in communicating their thoughts. These drawings often incorporate cultural styles and techniques which they can then develop into artistic forms of communication, important for dissemination of development messages within communities as well as on the international arena. Experience with methodologies like PLA and Action Aid's REFLECT methodology have shown that learning first to draw analytical diagrams speeds up the process of literacy and numeracy, giving confidence and motivation as well as fine motor skills necessary for writing. This means very poor people, normally excluded or marginalised even in 'participatory' processes, are able to participate on an equal level with other stakeholders, and have a respected voice.

Drawing and diagrams should not therefore be dismissed as 'tools for illiterates' but recognised as powerful analytical tools that help people at all levels to think clearly and creatively about complex issues, and to communicate this analysis effectively to other people. Providing the diagrams are based on reliable and systematic information, they provide a very convincing means of rapidly communicating research findings which can interest busy policymakers in reading a longer report.

The principle is that everyone must draw their own drawings. **NO ONE SHOULD EVER HOLD THE PEN OR MARKER FOR ANYONE ELSE.** Initially people may not want to draw - both people who cannot read and write and people with high levels of formal education. However, experience shows that everyone – children, old people who have never held a pen can all learn to draw very quickly if left to find their own way of doing things. Particularly if they find support and can laugh at their first attempts with others who are also starting out. It is generally advisable to put beginners all in a group together with occasional facilitator support, not put beginners with people who can write and are then tempted to help them too much. No one, however well-intentioned, must ever hold the pen for anyone else or that person will never learn or be able to develop their own plans. The only exceptions are people with particular disabilities who should be helped to adapt the methodology to their own needs.

Songs and drama

In addition to drawing, GALS participants develop new participatory songs and drama. As well as being enjoyable energisers, songs and drama reinforce gender messages and are a fun way of disseminating the methodology. Most sessions start and/or end with some culturally appropriate event such as a song or a dance which reinforces the basic philosophy and gender justice principles

of the particular tool or issue that is the subject of that particular meeting. As with drawing, there are no professional actors or singers, no one leads and everyone participates. The aim is not a polished performance to raise awareness, but to directly engage participants in identifying and rehearsing changes. Songs and drama are used to subvert existing cultural stereotypes, explore changes and experiment with different, new ways of doing things in future.

Box 6: Suggestions for PALS songs

PALS songs are intended as teaching tools as well as fun energisers. They should go well beyond 'PALS is good, long live PALS, listen to PALS'. It is suggested that they should consist of:

- 1) Chorus that is short and summarises the main lesson or purpose of the tool. The tune should be lively and recognisable enough for everyone present to join in.
- 2) Verses for each step that are sung by different people in turn.
- 3) The song itself can be illustrated with people holding up flipcharts of drawings for each step and/or dance actions representing the meaning.

