Basic Administration Skills

Agenda Item	Subject	Purpose or Aim	Method and Content	Materials	Time (Min)
A	Pre-workshop planning	Preparatory activities	See Standard Formats and Procedures for ALGAP Training – Part 4.A	Standard Formants	
B	Administrative organization		See Standard Formats and Procedures for ALGAP Training – Part 4.B	Standard Formants	30 min before
1	Welcome and prayer	Opening	See Standard Formats and Procedures for ALGAP Training – Part 4.C	Standard Formants	15 min
2	Introduction to Goal and objectives of workshop	Start the training activity; orient participants	**Lecture** : facilitator will post the flipchart on the wall and explains the overall goal of workshop as the following : To improve the capacity of provincial councilors in some important administrative skills **Asking Question:** facilitator will ask the participants : o **What are your expectations of this training?** o **What do you want to get from this training?** Then he writes the participants' responses on a flipchart. After that, he/she posts a flipchart presenting the main objectives of the training: At the conclusion of the workshop, participants will know: • What documents PCs need to keep. • Who should keep the documents • How to keep the documents. • How to register and file official correspondence. • How to write official letters. • How to organize documents using file folders. • Facilitator will mention that at the end of training, he will review the objectives briefly again with the participants to determine whether the objectives have been satisfactorily met.	Flip chart of goal and objectives	20 min

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3	Documentation	Demonstrate the importance of good documentation	**Exercise:** **Role-play:** **Process:** • Facilitator sets up the stage for the performance of the role play. • A person (Fayaz) will come into the room carrying a bundle of unorganized papers and yelling at his colleague: ***"Ahmad! Where is the report of health committee? Have you seen that?"*** • Ahmad replies: *"**I do not know. I just remember at that time that you placed it in this folder."*** • Fayaz replies: *"OK. Come and find it."* • Both friends begin to search for the report of the health committee among the lot of unorganized documents. • They search for the document but unfortunately they are not able to find it. • After struggling for some time, suddenly Fayaz says**, *"Now I remember. At that time I gave it to my friend who is a doctor to review it."*** • His colleague, Ahmad, says: ***"OK, but if we continue with this system we will lose a lot time and we will face a lot of problems. We should think about finding a constructive solution for keeping our documents."*** • After that the two colleagues agree to have a system for managing their documents. [End] Discussion: The facilitator will ask the participants : • Has anyone had this experience? • Do we have the same problems? • Does this situation create real problems? • How should we solve the problem? • What is missing? Facilitator encourages the participants to answer the questions and write their responses on the board. Transition: When we get back we will talk about what documents we should keep and how to keep them.	• 5 empty folders. • About 50 sheets of recycled paper	20min

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Tea break					20 min
4	What documents are important to keep?	For the group to come to its own conclusions about what documents should be kept	**Workshop Method** Facilitator will use the workshop method : • Facilitator will post the following question on the wall: What documents, forms, and letters do you use as a councilor during your work? • Divide participants into groups of two • Ask participants to work individually first, and write five responses to the question. • Invite the participants to share their responses with their partners and decide on the best three ideas. They will write their ideas on three cards -- one idea per card. • After five minutes the facilitator collects the cards and reads the cards one by one and posts on the wall. • Facilitator invites the participants to help him in clustering the posted cards. • During the clustering the facilitator helps the participants to combine the similar ideas. • Facilitator invites participants to help him title the clustered cards. • At the end of process the facilitator will discuss the final titles and post a flipchart on which and assistant has noted the PC important document which the participants have identified. • Before making a transition to the next session, the facilitator asks participants to identify from the list they produced and posted, "**Which documents or letters are very difficult to write?"** • **Which of them very useful in your work?** • Facilitator will highlight the topics identified by participants as most difficult to write, and most useful in their work. • After quickly prioritizing the topics, he/she will write them on a flip chart. • Facilitator will explain that in next session we work to improve our skills writing official letters.	• Focus question on flipchart. • Color title cards • The list of important documents. • Markers • Masking tape	60 min
Lunch Break					90 min

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5	Good communication	After the session participants will become more aware of the importance of good communication	**Start by story telling:** Facilitator first starts the session by telling story as follows: A very long time ago there was a king. One night he had a dream in which all his teeth fell out. Then he asked one dream interpreter to explain his dream. The dream interpreter said: *"Oh great king! All your relatives will die before you."* The king became upset and angry and he commanded that the person be sent to jail. Then he asked another person to explain his dream. This dream interpreter was very wise and said the following : *"Oh, great King! You will have a very great and long life –longer than your relatives."* The king became very happy and gave the person a very great bag of gold to show his appreciation for this better interpretation. The meaning of the two interpretations was the same but the way of expressing them was different. After telling this story facilitator asks the participants: **- What did you understand from this story?** **- What does it tell you about the importance of communication?** **- Have you had any problems communicating well during your work as councilor?** Facilitator writes answers on the board and discusses with participants. **A sample of an unprofessional (and ineffective) letter:** Facilitator will post the sample of an unprofessional and ineffective letter which has been written on a flipchart and ask the participants to read it carefully in silence. Then he/ she will ask for a volunteer among the participants to read the letter and explain it? (Participants will note that the letter has no date, no heading, no signature, no meaningful text.) Facilitator asks participants if the letter is effective. In other words, does it achieve its purpose? Facilitator asks participants to describe the *qualities* of an effective letter. Advise them to think in terms of: length, clarity, tone of voice.	• Sample of unprofessional letter which is written on flip chart	30 min

			Facilitator asks participants to describe how the recipient of a letter should feel after receiving a letter. (For example, s/he should understand the writer's concerns and objectives; S/he should feel sympathetic to the writer and motivated to respond to the problem or request).		
6	What are the main components of an official letter?	After the session the participant will know the components of official letters.	Facilitator asks the participants "**What do you know about the main components of a correctly-written official letter?"** Facilitator will record the answers on the board and encourage the groups to participate in the process. When participants answer the question, facilitator will post two flip charts on the wall: one of them presenting the components of an official letter, and the other presenting an example of the mentioned components. Facilitator explains flip charts briefly and asks participants their opinions about the component and example. He/she also asks someone to compare the components with the example.	• Flip chart which show the component of official letters • A complete example of official letter	20 minutes
7	Energizer	To refresh participants and prepare them for the next session.	Facilitator presents a bunch of cards. On each card one word is written. Ask participants: • Who can arrange these words to make a meaningful topic? • If one participant is unable to arrange the words, the facilitator will invite another participant to attempt to make a meaningful topic. • After the 15 minutes they will see that it is impossible to make it a meaningful topic due to grammatical points and incomplete structure. • Facilitator asks participants what lesson they have learned from this game. • Discuss the answers and invite the participants to prepare for next session.	• A bunch of cards • Masking tape	20 minutes

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8	How to write official letters and fill out forms? 	After this session participant will be able to write different official letters and fill out official forms.	**Practical Group work:** Before starting group work, facilitator will refer back to the components of official letters which have been written on a flip chart. After a short discussion about the importance of communication, facilitator divides the participants into five groups, and instructs each group to write two official letters on different subjects given by the facilitator. Facilitator assigns two writing subjects to each of the groups. The subjects of the official letter include the following : 1- Requesting information from health sector officials about their annual plan for province (using an official form). 2- Communicating to security sector officials some problems and support needs of provincial residents. 3- Persuading the provincial court to pay attention to a particular legal case. 4- Reporting a problem to the Meshrano Jirga and requesting support. 5- Suggestion letter to governor to provide needed supplies for PC Office. 6- Report of your meeting with Governor regarding the suggestion of the people from X-district to change the security commander. 7- A letter to the head of the educational sector inviting him/her to your regular PC meeting. 8- Acknowledgement letter for an NGO which has provided many useful services to the people of X-province. . After each group completes its work, it exchanges its letters with those written by another group. It reviews the other group's letters from the point of view of the intended recipient (for example, pretend you are the provincial health service, the Governor, the Meshrano Jirga, etc.). Recipients should answer the following questions about each letter: - Does the letter include all the major components of an official letter? (If not, what is missing?) - Is the problem or request clearly stated by the writer? (If not, what is unclear? How could the subject/request be made more clear?) - If you were an official receiving the letter, would you be pleased with the letter, and inclined to respond favorably to the request? Why or why not?	• Flipcharts • Markers • A set of official letters as samples	90 minutes

			(Does the tone of the letter strike an appropriate balance between courtesy and insistence on action)? After the groups present and comment on the letters they've received, the facilitator distributes a handout which includes samples of official letters. He reviews several of the different types of letters with the participants and suggests how they can use the sample letters as a guide.		
9	How to register our official letters in registration books.	After the session participants will be able to enroll their outgoing and incoming correspondence in registration books	**Lecture and Practical Group Work:** ➢ Facilitator points out that when we receive an official letter or send an official letter on a particular issue, it is possible that after a month or so we may forget it, and suddenly one day we will need to follow up on it. When that happens, how can we quickly remember the date of the letter and verify whether we ever sent a response or not? ➢ **Facilitator asks PCs "Do you have a specific system for registering incoming and outgoing letters in your PC office?** ➢ After discussion he/she shows the format of registration books which are used in some PCs using a flipchart on which the registration format has been drawn. ➢ After the explanation of the registration format, he/she asks the groups which prepared letters during the previous exercise to register the letters they wrote using a flip chart as a register page. ➢ Facilitator will provide the groups with a copy of the registration format and ask them to first draw the format on the flip chart and second enroll the letters in the format. ➢ When the groups have finished registering their letters the speaker of each group will present their work to the other participants. The facilitator will ask participants to correct any mistakes they have noticed. ➢ At the end of the session, facilitator gives the participants the handout prepared for this session.	• The format of registration books. • Markers. • Flip chart	60min
10	How to create a chronological file for correspondence	Participants will know how to set up system for effectively managing correspondence files	**Demonstration and practical exercise** Facilitator will remind participants that in the previous session they practiced registering the outgoing and incoming letters in registration books. After that in this stag we need to keep those letters. What if we need to consult the original letter? How can we be sure to retrieve it quickly?	• 2 empty chronological files labeled "incoming correspondence" and "outgoing correspondence" • Five 2-hole punches	

			Facilitator asks participants to describe what system they use for filing in-coming and outgoing correspondence. Facilitator explains that one effective system for managing correspondence is to set up ***chronological files*** – one for incoming correspondence, and the other for outgoing correspondence. Letters are placed in the chronological file in the same order they are registered. Two holes are punched in the letter and they are inserted in the chronological file with the most recent letter **on top.** The Facilitator notes that it will help if the PC gets into the habit of writing on the top of each incoming letter the word "Received" followed by the date the letter actually arrived in the hands of the PC. **Demonstration/Exercise in Use of 2-hole punch and chron file:** The facilitator will ask participants if any of them can provide a demonstration of how to correctly use a 2-hole punch machine. He/she will point out that this may seem simple, but if the paper is not inserted properly, the holes may be too close to the edge of the paper (demonstrate) resulting in the paper tearing. Also, if the paper guide is not used correctly, the holes will not be made in the middle of the paper, resulting in lopsided pages that don't line up. Facilitator invites 3 or 4 participants to use the punch and chron file, and the group evaluates their work. The facilitator shows them that if the punches are made correctly, the holes on all 4 pages will line up correctly. **Exercise/game** Facilitator divides participants into 5 groups. To each group he gives a 2-hole punch, and a set of dummy letters, well shuffled in random order. (Each of the letters will clearly indicate the date received or sent, and who the sender/receiver is). [Note: Each of the 14 letters will also have a handwritten letter from A to N marked in the bottom left corner to help the facilitator quickly determine if it has been filed in the correct order. The correct order for incoming letters should be G-B-N-I-D-J-E. The correct order for outgoing letters should be L-F-A-C-K-H-M.] He instructs the groups to properly organize the dummy letters for insertion in the chronological files (incoming and outgoing), by putting them in the proper	• 10 sheets of blank A4 paper • Five sets of 14 dummy letters, including 7 sent by PC-X, and 7 received by PC-X on different dates • 10 black binder clips (small size	

			order, punching them correctly, (and binding them with small binder clip). He announces that the winning group will be the group that submits its letters properly organized in the shortest time. As each group submits its work, he arranges the piles from first to last. When all the groups have submitted their work, he lists the correct order of the letters on a flip chart. G-B-N-I-D-J-E for incoming correspondence and F-A-C-K-H-M for outgoing correspondence. He invites 2 judges to check the piles, one-by-one to see who filed their correspondence correctly. Facilitator announces the winners of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd places. If many of the groups had problems correctly filing their letters, the facilitator investigates to determine why, and helps the groups to correct their errors.		
11	How to organize your documents in the folders? 	To enable the participants to organize their filing system	**Brainstorming** **Process:** Facilitator invites participants to brainstorm for 5 minutes on following question: • How can we arrange our documents in folders and how can we keep them safely? • What methods are you using now for your documentation? • Facilitator writes the group answers on the board and highlights the main points. • Facilitator will refer to the list of important documents which was prepared by participants using workshop method and ask them how con we classify the documents to make a very easy and useful filing system? • Facilitator records the participant's responses then he /she will discuss and highlight the main points of the responses. **Lecture :** • Facilitator will explain some methods which are common in the world for filing systems and will mention it's up to PCs to choose a useful and easy way to file their documents.	Handout.	30min

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12	Application and Practice	To strengthen through on the job practice the skills addressed during the workshop sessions	Note for Facilitator: The application and practice is an important component of the workshop to assist the participants in learning more and strengthening their skills and abilities. Your role as a facilitator is to present some application and practice options for the participants. The options should be an activity related to their work and to the workshop that can be done within about two weeks. For the Application and Practice component to be effective it will be necessary to have a short, one day or less, follow up workshop session in which each participant brings in the work they have completed. You will need to develop a simple process that will help them discuss what they did, what difficulties they encountered; what observations they have about the skills or abilities on which they were working. What factors or conditions in their work situation helped or hindered them in utilizing the skills; What further questions have arisen that they believe would be useful to examine. Application and Practice Suggestions: o Write official letters; file them Registrations books for coming and going letters o Review the current organization of the filing system within their office or organization: and develop specific suggestions for improving it, or specific questions about filing systems with which they would like to have additional information. o Take some other action in which they address a real administration situation or problem within their office or organization. o Each participant should be very specific about the situation they will address and the actions they will take. Ideally this should be a written statement before they leave the current workshop session.		10 min

	Closing and debriefing	Allow participants to leave the session ready and enthusiastic for the next one. To allow them to debrief from anything that may have left them feeling negative or angry.	Return to the flipcharts that contain the participants' objectives of the workshop and the objectives prepared by ALGAP. Review each objective briefly to verify whether participants feel it has been accomplished or not. Ask group to openly discuss the content and outcome of the session.	o Flip Chart Templates (Format A, Plan of Activities). Masking tape.	30 minutes

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Sample File Classification System

Primary Classification	Secondary Classification	Sub-secondary
General Administration	Correspondence	Incoming Outgoing
	Personnel	Leaves Cases Reports
	Property Management	Inventories Reports
	Finance	Budget Invoices Receipts Disbursements Reports
	Policies	Personnel Property Management Finance
Planning	Work Plans	Council Level Committee level
	Action Plans	Council Level Committee level
	Plan Monitoring Reports	Reports
Council Activities	Meetings	Notice of Meetings Agenda Minutes of Meetings Council Resolutions
	District Consultations	Reports
	Specific Activity Information • Social Services/welfare • Economic Development • Security • Conflict Resolution	Reports
Committee Activities	Meetings	Notice of Meetings Agenda Minutes of Meetings Committee Resolutions
Inter-governmental Relations	Laws, Rules, Regulations, Policies	
	Specific activities/actions	Reports
	Budget Review	Departmental Budgets Reports
	Plan Review	Departmental Plans Reports
Others	Reference materials	Books, magazines, newspapers etc.