

Introduction

What is a Rural Community Resource Centre?

A resource centre is a place where members of a community can:

- Find information about subjects of interest to them.
- Take part in learning activities.
- Discuss and share knowledge, information and concerns with extension and other community workers, planners and administrators.
- Find materials to help them retain their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Meet to organise and work together on community projects.
- Use equipment to produce their own informational materials.
- Enjoy culture and leisure activities.

What are the Benefits of a Centre?

A centre can:

- Provide information and activities which will help community members acquire the skills, knowledge and confidence to participate more fully in community affairs.
- Provide information and activities about health and agricultural techniques, business, etc. to assist communities to improve their economic situation.
- Provide a forum through which governments and other agency workers can be informed about concerns, problems and reactions of community members to their plans and programmes.
- Provide support to extension programmes and help extension workers to co-ordinate their work in the community.
- Strengthen a community's involvement in, and appreciation of, local and national culture.
- Serve as a focal point for community activities and enhance a sense of belonging among community members.

Therefore if you are

- a community leader or elder
 - a religious leader
 - a school teacher
 - a health worker
 - an agricultural extension worker
 - a literacy teacher
 - a community or rural development worker
 - a librarian
 - a women's group leader
 - a youth group leader
 - or someone active in community leadership and activities,
- then this guide is for you.**

It can help you and your community to understand the basic procedures to follow in developing a resource centre in your community.

About the Guide

The guide is written in four major sections:

Introduction

Part 1: Setting up a Centre: Promoting, Planning, Organising and Supervising Tasks

Part 2: Operating the Centre: the Day-to-Day Tasks

Part 3: Extra Information

This Introduction sets out the benefits of a community learning resource centre.

Parts 1 and 2 describe the tasks of setting up a learning resource centre in the order in which they should be done.

Part 3 of the guide gives additional information that can help a community to carry out the tasks easily and quickly.

Each rural community will have its own unique needs and its own unique economic, cultural and political conditions. Tasks may have to be adapted to meet these needs and conditions. For this reason the guide gives only suggestions and examples to show different ways in which tasks can be done.

Even where the words 'must' and 'should' are used in this guide, the instructions can be changed to meet the local situation.

Each community is unique and should develop its resource centre to meet its own needs and conditions.

Those who organise training courses for community leaders and the staff of a centre may wish to obtain the training manual which accompanies this guide. Information about the manual is given on page 27.