RIGHT TO INFORMATION TRAINING

for Civil Society and Journalists (Demand Side)

A COURSE GUIDE
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Course Overview

The right to information (RTI) is internationally recognised as a human right which is critical to democratic and accountable government. Some of the benefits of the effective enforcement of the right to information are citizen participation and an informed populace; the building of trust in government by preventing false rumours from spreading through the dissemination of true and reliable official information; and the combating of corruption and promotion of effective and efficient governance.

This course is an introduction to the right of individuals to access information held by public officials, otherwise known as ‘the right to information’. It is aimed at African civil society and journalists, or “demand side” actors, meaning those who are seeking information from public officials. It is also aimed at building the capacity of African users of RTI systems to take full advantage of the right to information, in accordance with local legislation on this right. The course also seeks to raise awareness about the significance of the right to information, which is a fundamental human right.

Although the specific legal parameters vary significantly from country to country, this course aims to set a normative standard for how to seek information held by public officials in line with international human rights standards. The course also serves as:

1. A reference/information tool for training demand side actors in Africa on the right to information;
2. A tool for training of trainers (ToTs) on the right to information; and
3. A guide for ToTs on training methodologies and approaches.

Training objectives

The objectives of this training are to:

1. Increase participants’ knowledge of the right to information;
2. Develop participants’ capacity to make use of the right to information;
3. Promote a better understanding among participants of how the right to information is beneficial to both citizens and public authorities; and
4. Help participants understand how they can contribute to better implementation of the right to information.

Structure of the course

This course is structured as follows:

- Introduction
- Module 1: Introduction to the Right to Information
- Module 2: The Legal Framework for the Right to Information
- Module 3: Making and Processing Requests
- Module 4: Interpreting Exceptions
- Module 5: Appeals and Promotional Roles
- Evaluation
Each module explores various themes connected to RTI implementation and accompanying instructions on how to engage with the material. Each module is divided into different activities with defined topics, aims and tasks. Activities include moderator and expert videos, exercises/games, reading material, useful RTI resources, discussion forums, and quizzes. The content is designed to impart content that helps allow participants to actively engage in the discussion forums that take place in all modules. These discussion forums are structured around an overall question, which participants are asked to individually comment on. Participants are similarly asked to comment on other participants’ responses in order to facilitate an interactive conversation. Participants are auto-subscribed to each participant in the forum and receive an email notification each time a fellow participant posts in the forum or responds to their posts.

Only when all necessary tasks for each activity in each module are completed can participants move on to the next module. At the end of each module, participants will be required to pass a quiz, scoring at least 80% (three tries will be allowed), to move onto the next module. The course also has a Zoom integration facility whereby discussions can be held live, similar to in a classroom. At the end of the course, participants will be asked to evaluate it to assist with continuous improvement of this and future courses.

What is expected from you?

The following is expected from you to ensure productive engagement of all participants:

- To approach the subject matter with an open mind;
- To commit to begin and complete the course within the allocated time frame and to communicate with the course organisers when problems are encountered;
- To interact with fellow participants in a respectful and egalitarian manner; and
- To maintain a focus on the relevant issues.

Accessing the Online course

To access the course participants should go to the following link  https://fesmedia.scholarlms.com. Here you need to create your free account.
You will then receive an email confirming the creation of the account. When you click on the link in your email it will take you here:
Click on the RTI for Demand Side Actors in the top right corner and you will end up here:

Click on Self and it will take you here:
Click on enroll me and you will be enrolled and directed to the home page of the course here:
Login page

Once URL has been copied and pasted into the search engine the above page should appear, take the following steps to login and there you use the username and password you created to login.

Home Page

The above home page will appear. Once on the home page you will notice the following:

1. A profile icon with a downward pointing arrow next to it. This is your profile where you can edit your personal details.

2. Next to the profile icon is a message icon, this icon will show next to it the number of messages you have. The messages may come from course administrators or fellow course participants. You can use this icon to check messages sent to you and to send messages to other participants in the course as well as course administrators, experts and moderators.

3. Next to the messages icon you will find a bell icon this will show any announcements as posted by the course administrators.

4. In order to access the course, you are enrolled in, on the right hand side of the home page you will see “My courses” this will have a list of all course you are enrolled in this case either RTI Training for Supply Side (Government/Public Officials) or RTI Training for Demand Side (Civil Society and Journalists)
The course homepage has several things to look out for, these include:

1. On the left side of the course home page is a progress bar, this will show you your progress in the course and the amount of time you have spent in the course.

2. Further down on the left side, you will see a table of contents. The table of contents shows you the course modules and what each module entails.

3. In the middle of the course home page, you will see the course content, this is where you access the course module. Remember the modules work in a chronological order, therefore you will have to start with the introduction section before moving on to module one and with module one before moving onto module two.

When you click on Access it will take you to the course.
Introduction

1. Welcome to the Right to Information (RTI) Training Course - this section gives you a brief introduction to the course, how it was put together and introduces you to sponsors and co-sponsors of the course.

2. About the Right to Information – this section gives you a summary of the right to information.
3. Course experts and moderators – this section features short bios of all course moderators and experts.

4. About this course – this section is a critical guideline to completing the course.

5. Glossary – features several terms and definitions which will be used throughout the course.

6. Introduce yourself discussion forum – this forum encourages participants to network by introducing themselves to one another.

7. Announcements – this section will entail any course announcements posted by the course administrators.

8. General discussions forum – in this forum participants are encouraged to discuss any other course matter related to this training that may not have been discussed in the various modules.

**Course Content**

The course entails the following learning tools:

1. Expert and moderator videos (shown below)

   These videos are recorded by course experts and moderators and give a synopsis of the module topics.

2. Discussion forums

   Discussion forums are there to enhance engagement between fellow participants, course experts and course moderators. Each discussion forum focuses on the module topic.
3. Interactive games

These games are there to encourage learning and to ensure that participants learn the content in an engaging way. Clear instructions are given on how the games are to be played.

4. Reading material

This is written content in form of a book. The content here is also reiterated in the module videos.
5. **Additional readings and resources**

These resources can be used for further reading to improve the knowledge of participants on the subject matter.

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6. **Module quizzes**

At the end of each module, there is a module quiz, these module quizzes need to be passed with 80% or higher in order for participants to move on to the next module.
Good Luck!