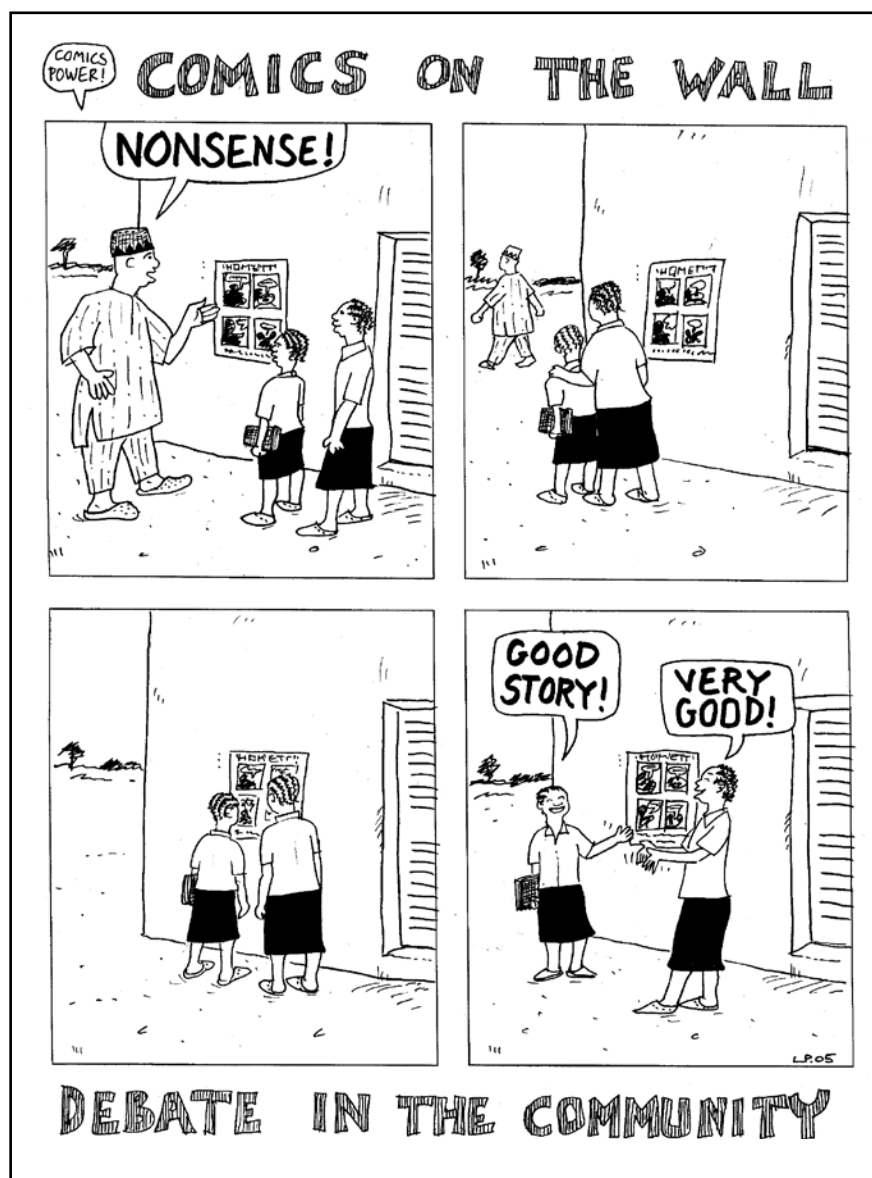




WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

TRAINER'S GUIDE

by Leif Packalén
World Comics-Finland, 2014



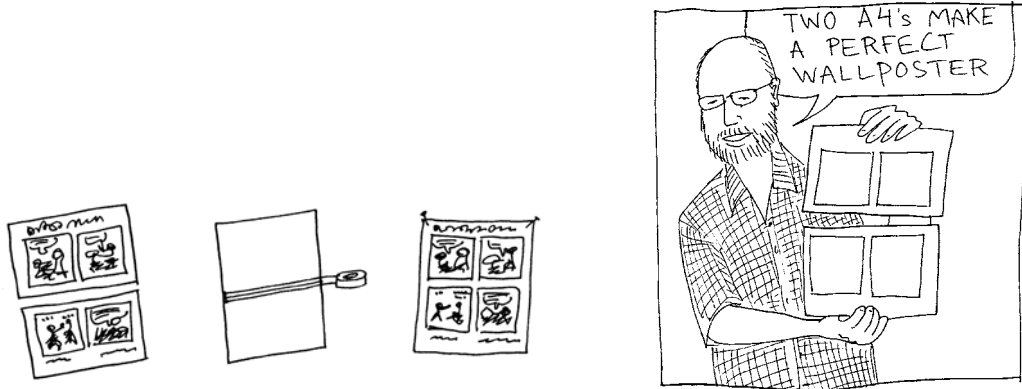
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This guide is made for civil society activists who plan to run wallposter comics workshops within their own organisations or groups.

All steps needed to run a workshop are fully explained in the guide and it should be used together with our manual **“HOW TO MAKE WALLPOSTER COMICS”**, which should be given as a handout to the participants.

To arrange a wallposter comics workshop you need two trainers, a hall, pens, papers, and access to a copying machine. Your participants (about 15 - 20) should be motivated people, e.g. community activists, who wish to have their voices heard about issues they want to raise.

However, a good idea could be to start with a small test group (4 -5 persons), go through all the steps, gain experience and confidence, before doing the first “real” workshop. To make wallposter comics is not so complicated and the method has proven quite easy to grasp even in very different cultures, so you can feel confident your group can make something out of it, too.

Make your voices heard in your community with this exciting and simple communication tool - wallposter comics!

Leif Packalén

Chairman

World Comics Finland

May 2014

Wallposter comics for social change

Comics are an inexpensive medium, which can be used by people who normally have no access to media. You need only paper, pens and a good story to tell.

The technology involved is simple. You only need access to a photocopy machine or a photocopying shop.

Local comics (a.k.a grassroots comics) have credibility in the communities. People are much more interested in their fellow community members' opinions than in the opinions of outsiders. If you use local language and idioms your credibility is much higher.

Comics on the walls **create debate**.



If a group wants to use wallposter comics what should be considered?

What is the exact message you want to go out with? What is your expected outcome of your campaign? What exactly do you want to change? Here you have to spend time discussing within the group and you need to work out the answers so that the whole group agrees.

The practical circumstances determine the scope of what you can do. You will have to decide:

Who will be in charge of the production of the comics?

Will the comics be made in a workshop or over a longer period?

How many comics can you afford to make?

How many comics will be chosen for copying and distribution?

Where will the comics be photocopied/printed?

Who will be in charge of coordination, purchasing and supplies?



TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

Training philosophy:

The process of making a wallposter comic is split into small steps that do not at any time seem overwhelming or feel intimidating.

1. Discussion on the theme and the messages
2. Creating storylines
3. Making a manuscript
4. Drawing the final artwork and lettering
5. Photocopying and distribution

It is important that the trainer does not change or influence the comics too much. The workshop participants must feel that it is their own stories that in the end are put up on a wall. The trainer's main concern is the **readability** of the comics.



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TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

Step 1:

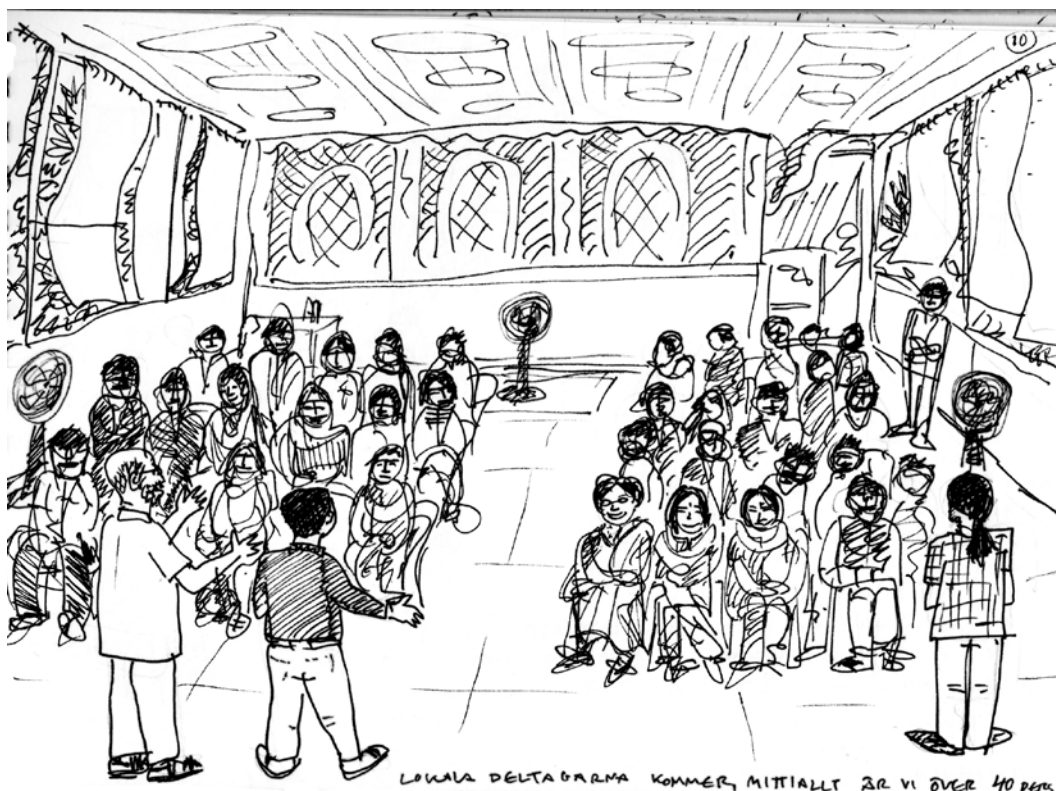
Description: Introducing the trainers and the participants to each other.

Action: A host presents the trainers, who then give a short summary of who they are and what they have done in relation to grassroots comics.

After this the participants introduce themselves, stating name and background organisation.

Results: Everybody knows each other and understands their roles at the workshop.

Remarks: At this stage the trainers can also ask what expectations the participants have and if there are some special worries they have (some might think that they cannot draw well enough, and need to be reassured).





TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

Step 2: (Page 4 in the manual)

Description: Orientation to the grassroots comics concept

Action: explain:

- comics are stories with a message
- grassroots comics are made by activists, not professional artists - genuine voices!
- grassroots comics are made for photocopying - show the two A4 = A3
- show samples of comics made by different groups from other countries and by likeminded groups of similar background/size

Distribute the manual ***"How to make wallposter comics"*** to the participants.

Results: The participants understand now that they are not going to make comics in the same way as they appear in newspapers or in comic books. They understand the basic technologies involved. They are inspired by likeminded efforts by groups similar to their own, and gain confidence. Everybody has now the manual for easy reference.

Remark: Go thoroughly through three or four sample stories and explain especially the messages and their target groups.





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Step 3:

Description: Decide on the theme

Action: Divide the group in subgroups of 4 - 5 participants and ask them to suggest three themes on which they would like to make their comics. Then each group chooses one of the themes.

Results: The participants have chosen a theme which is important to them.

Remark: If the group is already very much involved in a specific activity, they might have a theme ready, so there is no need to go through the choosing process.





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Step 4:

Description: The concepts of focus, message and target group

Action: Explain:

- a focus is necessary, otherwise the message becomes too general. A specific message is always more powerful than a broad approach.
- the message should be clear: which change or result is desired?
- the message should have a defined target group

Results: The participants understand that a focused message is better than a broad one, and that if the desired outcome and the target group are well defined, the story becomes more to the point.

Remark: Go back to the sample comics in Step 2 and point out the target groups in them.





TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

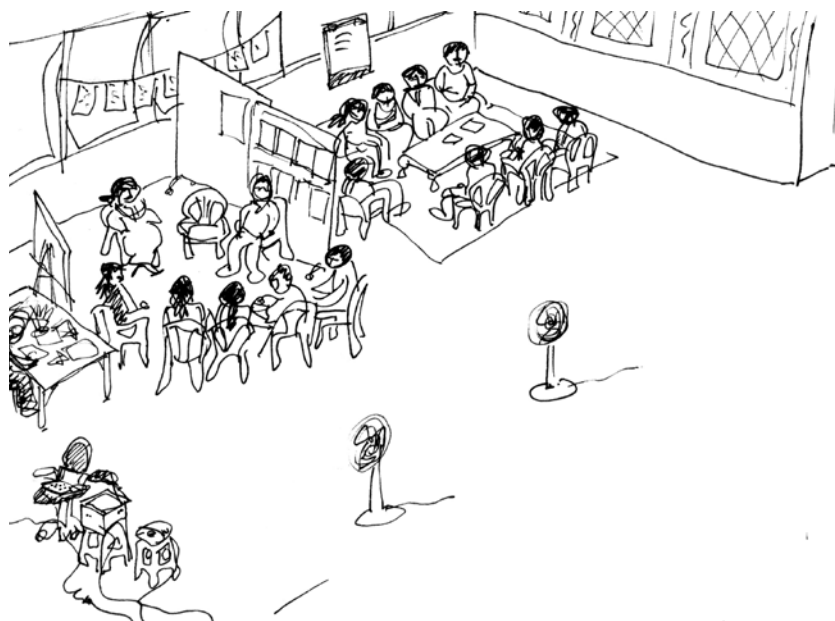
Step 5:

Description: Choose focus, message and target groups

Action: Each group is given the task to choose a focus of their theme, spell out the exact message and define the target group. These decisions should be written down. After this, each group presents its choices in a full session and everybody is allowed to comment.

Results: The message and the target group are defined, and the building blocks for the stories are now ready.

Remark: Stress the point that the choices the groups make should be focused messages which they are familiar with and/or feel strongly about. This improves the quality of the stories.





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Step 6:

Description: Propose a story

Action: Each participant should propose a story with a message directed to the target group. The trainer explains that the story cannot be very complicated or have a lot of characters as it must fit into four panels.

Each participant will spell out what story he/she wants to make, and the trainer and the other participants can comment.

Results: Each participant will have a story with a defined message and target group to work on.

Remark: Point out that drama works better than a strictly educational message. Stress that the beginning of the story must be interesting, so that the reader wants to know what happens in the end.





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Step 7: (Page 6 in the manual)

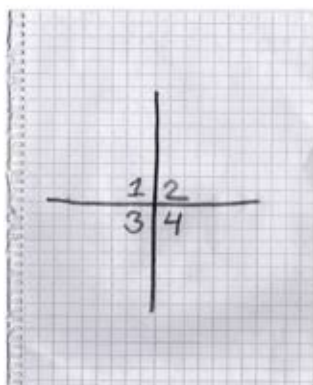
Description: Write down the story in four parts

Action: Explain that the story must be divided into four parts, one part for each panel. This means: only one action/location per panel.

Each participant **writes** down his/her story in a four-frame grid and shows it to the trainer. The trainer gives individual advice to each participant.

Results: Each participant has a story which is possible to fit into a four-panel wallposter comic. The story is now ready for the next step - the **visual** script.

Remark: Show how a story can be made compact by putting background information in an explanatory box in the beginning.





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Now put the stories aside and go through comics rules, drawing, placing of texts and images. These next steps (8-18) prepare the participants for making their visual script.

Step 8: (Pages 17 and 18 in the manual)

Description: Drawing exercise I - faces

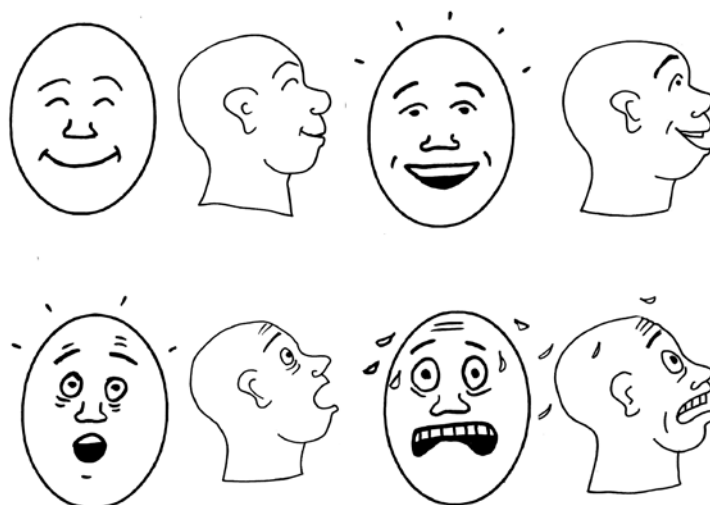
Action: Start the drawing exercise with facial expressions.

- ask the participants to copy some faces from the manual and to also invent new ones.
- arrange the participants in pairs and ask them to draw each other's facial expressions (posing for 1,5 minutes) 3 or 4 times.

The drawings are then put up on the walls and quickly examined by everybody.

Results: Building up confidence in drawing ability.

Remark: Find something positive in each drawing!





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Step 9: (Pages 14-16 in the manual)

Description: Drawing exercise II - body postures

Action: Explain the stick figure method.

- ask participants to copy some postures from the manual
- have a live model posing for 3 minutes, 4 - 5 postures

The drawings are put up on the wall and looked through by everybody. Again, the trainers should give mainly encouraging feedback.

Results: Building up confidence in drawing ability.

Remark: Find something positive in each drawing.





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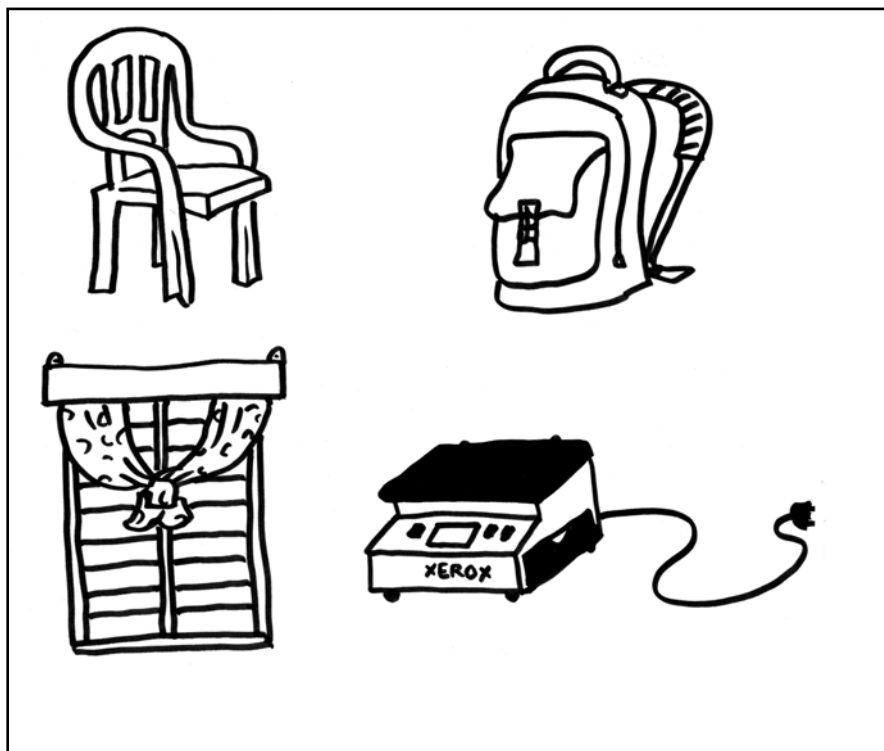
Step 10:

Description: Drawing exercise III - objects

Action: Ask the participants to draw some object in the classroom, a chair, a table, a bag, a window, a cupboard – anything. Put the drawings up on the wall.

Results: Building up confidence in drawing.

Remark: Find something positive in each drawing.





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Step 11:

Description: Drawing exercise IV - outdoors

Action: Ask the participants to go outdoors and draw:

- a building
- a tree
- a vehicle
- a landscape with a horizon

Results: Building up confidence in drawing, understanding that perspective exists.

Remark: This exercise can be combined with an outing of some kind.





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Step 12: (Page 13 in the manual)

Description: Foreground, background and horizon

Action: Explain that in comics the important things happen in the foreground. Background and horizon are secondary and only indicate environment.

Results: The participants understand the basic use of panel space.

Remark: Show many examples, also the grid on page 13 in the manual.





TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

Step 13: (Pages 8-10 in the manual)

Description: Readability

Action: Explain the concept of readability:

- texts should be easy to read (straight lines, size 1 cm, spacious balloons)
- images should be big enough and not cluttered with details
- the reading order should be logical
- the picture is read first, then the texts
- the amount of text should be minimized, comics are primarily visual

Results: The participants understand that both pictures and texts are read and that comics should have logical sequence.

Remark: Explain that readability is the main criteria at the critique session to come. If the comic is not understood in the intended way, it's useless.





TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

Step 14: (Page 8 in the manual)

Description: Reading order

Action: Explain that comics are read from left to right (first criteria) and from up to down (second criteria).

This rule is absolute (but in Arabic and in some other languages the order is reverse).

Results: Participants understand that reading order is a cornerstone in visual storytelling.

Remark: Analyze a panel with a question, an answer and an additional comment.





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Step 15: (Pages 8-10 in the manual)

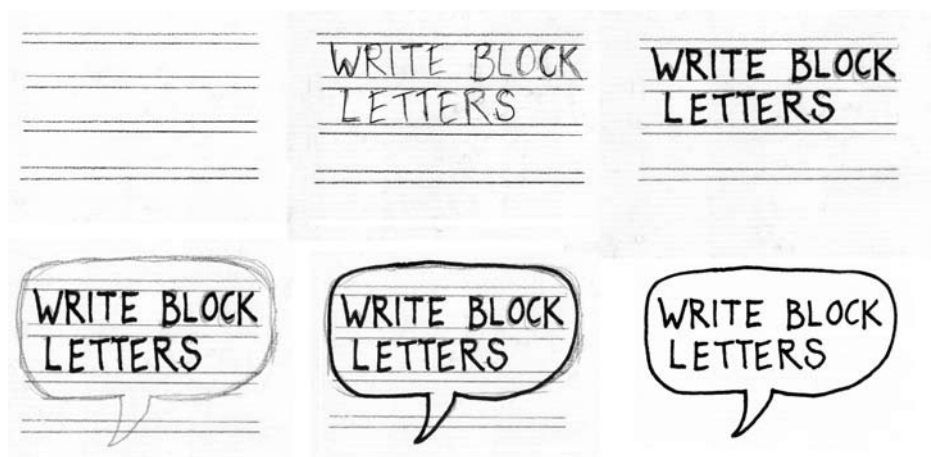
Description: How to write and place texts in comics

Action: Explain:

- avoid writing in the text what is clear from the picture (texts must always bring additional information to the story)
- size of text is important especially if the comics are later converted into strips. (recommended size is 1 cm).
- draw the guiding lines first, and then pencil in the texts.
- after this, make the shape of the speech balloon
- show different types of texts: explanatory boxes, speech balloons, thought balloons, mechanical sound, etc.
- usually, it is best to have speech balloons in the upper part of the panel above the speaking characters.

Results: Participants understand that they will have to work with the texts quite a lot and that there are many things to consider.

Remark: Show different lettering and balloon styles from the sample comics (Step 2).





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Step 16: (Page 19 in the manual)

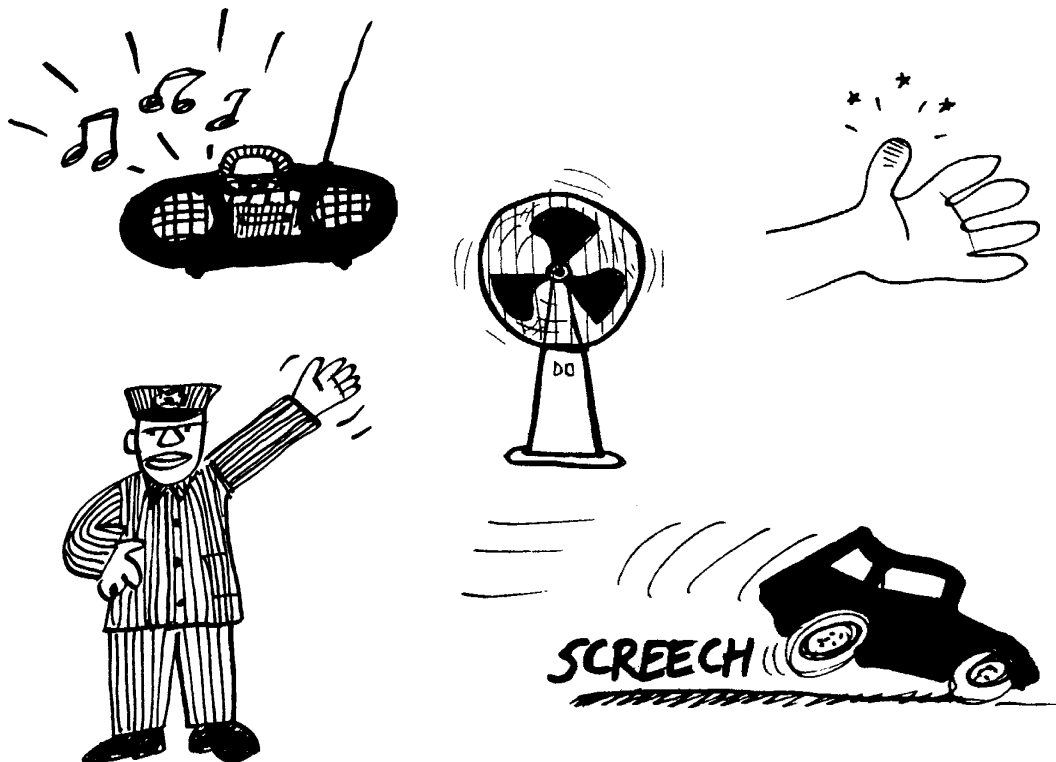
Description: Visual effects for sound, movement etc

Action: Explain that sound and movement can be indicated by visual clues. Show sound, movement, pain, smell, and other effects.

Explain also that these effects are not universal, and that they vary from one culture to the other.

Results: The participants understand that effects can enhance the stories.

Notes: Show effects from your sample comics.





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Step 17: (Page 11 in the manual)

Description: Heading of the comic

Action: Explain

- the heading is important as it is the first thing that will be read.
- the heading should not reveal the point of the story (that would be a disappointment to the reader).
- the heading should be interesting so that the reader would like to know what the story is about.
- the heading can be decorated with visual elements with some relevance to the story.

Results: The participants understand that the heading is an element to attract the reader.

GRASSESE MON DE SIRE

BIMTA JEUNE FILLE MIGRANTE. ET KALIFA
LE FILS DE SA PATRONNE

KALIFA A ÉTÉ SEDUIT PAR BIMTA, SA
SERVANTE. MAIS L'AFFAIRE EST DIFFICILE



AMATATI Y'AMATONGO



KIRAZIRA

NOBENEREJE

NYAHO



القضية



واحتار الاصل على الأمل في القضية

تحت سقف البيت الواحد هناك تباين مختلفين



TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

Step 18: (Page 7 in the manual)

Description: the Visual script

Action: Explain that a visual script is necessary because it shows if all elements of the story are in the right places. The texts are written out in full, but the drawings are only roughly sketched. The script is still open for changes and can be shown to friends and colleagues for their opinions.

Especially point out:

- the visual script is a sketch – the drawing should not be much elaborated.

Results: The participants understand that a visual script is a necessary step.

Remark: Show several visual scripts (if available).





TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

Step 19:

Description: The visual script is shown to the trainers

Action: Ask each participant to bring his/her visual script for scrutiny. Go through the following:

- is the story easy to understand correctly?
- is the heading ok?
- is the reading order correct?
- are there any writing errors in the text?
- is the balance between images and texts ok?

Check also the Appendix "common errors" on page 37 of this guide.

Results: The participants' visual scripts are gone through in detail and they are now confident to move to the next step (making final artwork).

Remark: If there are many corrections to be made, ask the participant to show the script again after the changes.





TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

Step 20: (Page 23 in the manual)

Description: Measurements and process of final artwork

Action: Explain

the measurements:

- why A4? Two A4s with the same grid make an A3
- always turn the lower paper so that the narrow margins face each other

the process:

- sketch lightly with pencil when you make the final artwork, because the pencil lines will have to be erased later
- ink with thin line - then erase pencil lines
- fill in solid black areas
- textures and fill-ins

Results: confidence in procedure and tools

Remark: Show crosshatching as an alternative method to solid black.





TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

Step 21: (Page 22 in the manual)

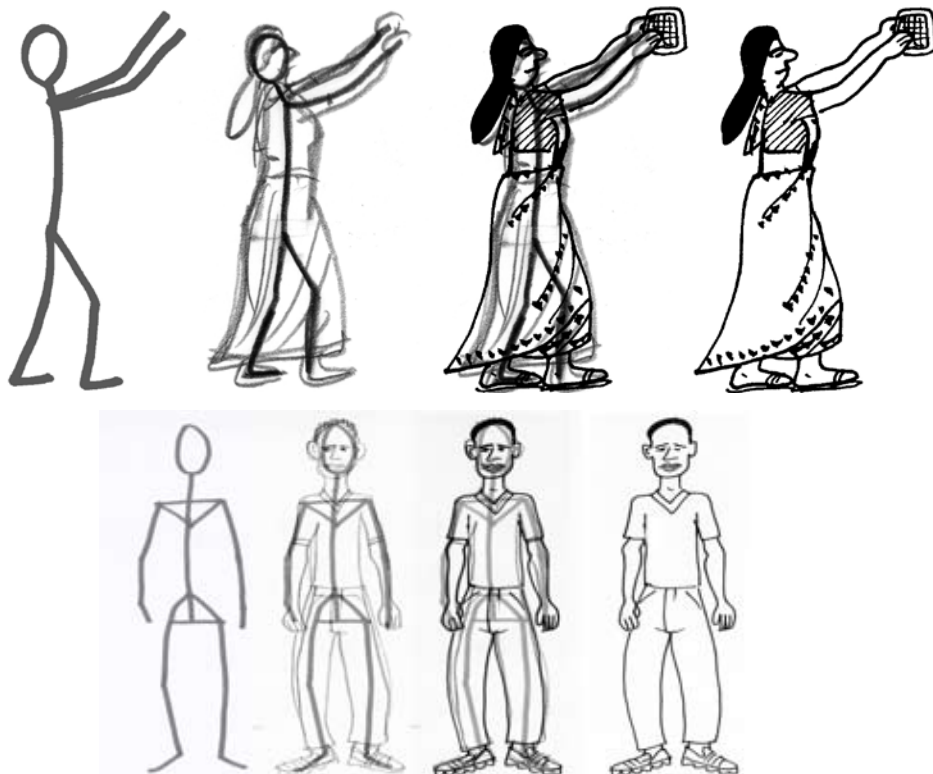
Description: Inking exercise

Action: Explain inking:

- always in black, no colours or pencils (grayscale)
- drawing textures, decorations
- ask the participants to test their inking equipment on their visual scripts

Results: confidence in inking, testing of equipment

Remark: Demonstrate the inking process to a group of 3 - 4 participants at a time. It is important for them to **see** the change from a pencilled line to an inked line.





TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

Step 22: (Page 23 in the manual)

Description: Actual artwork

Action: the participants redraw their sketches in full scale

explain:

- importance of guiding pencil lines for texts
- the artwork should at first be lightly drawn with pencil
- the trainers can help but should not change the drawing
- individual tutoring on inking and corrections
- for surfaces, etc, see page 20 in manual

Results: the artwork is ready to be copied

Notes: Ask the participants to show their pencil drawing before they start inking. Sometimes there are new errors.





TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

Step 23:

Description: Artwork photocopying

Action: All originals are now taken for copying and a sufficient number of copies, about 10 *) is made.

If A3 size is available, make the wallposter comics in that size, as it is more convenient to handle them.

Results: The artworks have turned into comics.

Remark: If convenient, take the participants to follow the photocopying procedure, if convenient. The experience of seeing one's own artwork being reproduced for distribution is rewarding.



- *)
- 1 for the review session
 - 5 for distribution
 - 2 for archive and scanning
 - 2 for the participant to take home



TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

Step 24:

Description: Critique session

Action: All comics are pinned up on a wall and all participants should look at them with enough time.

The trainer comments on the comics, one by one:

- is the message correctly understood?
- is the balance between text and images ok?
- is readability ok?
- does the comic attract attention from a distance?
(enough black portions)

After this, the trainer invites the other participants to give comments and give the creator of the comic also an opportunity to share his/her views.

Results: Each participant will get proper feedback on his/her work.

Remark: Take into account that this might take several hours, so break up regularly for stretching, tea, etc





TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

Step 25:

Description: Distribution of the comics

Action: The wallposters are distributed in the community or in places where they can be read by many people.

However, please tell the participants not to put their comics up on walls without permission from the owners.

School noticeboards and offices are also good places where comics can be put up (provided you get permission from the people in charge).

Trees and fences, ordinary house walls are options too.

Results: the comics can be read by the target group.

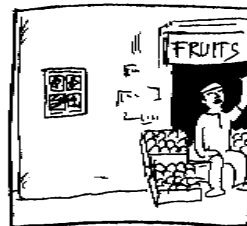
Remark: Even for people who are not in the target group, the issue in the comics can be informative.



On house walls



On trees



Next to a shop



On notice boards

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TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

Step 26:

Description: Collect feedback

Action: Ask the participants to collect from the the local people at least 5 opinions on their comics. They should write down the main points. The whole workshop is brought into full session and each participant reports on the response from the local people. If you have many participants you can restrict each one to read out only two opinions, one positive and one negative.

Results: The participants get feedback from the target group and, hopefully, get inspired to continue using the medium of comics.

Remark: The feedback could be systematically compiled for later use, as very little material of this kind is available.





TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

Step 27:

Description: Workshop review

Action: All participants are brought into full session and asked to write down their impressions of the workshop:

- what was positive
- what could have been improved

Collect the opinions and then let the participants give their views to the full session. Encourage constructive criticism.

If you plan to make a report, make sure you collect all addresses and ask general permission to use the workshop material in the report (and on your website, if applicable).

Results: The organisers get feedback.

Remark: The participants should be given back their original artwork, unless there is a special reason for not doing so.





TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

Step 28:

Description: Workshop closing words

Action: In a full session the participants should be thanked for their work and enthusiasm.

The certificates (if any) are distributed to the participants. Allow time for photographing.

If you plan to have another workshop, mention it now and say if these participants are eligible to join that.

Explain how the participants will be supported in their grass-roots comics efforts in the future (if applicable).

If there are publication prospects (exhibitions, compilations, websites, anthologies etc) for the participants' later comics, explain about them now.

Also tell about other workshops that are in the pipeline in other parts of the country (or world).

If you plan to send a report to all participants, give an approximate date when it can be expected.

Take a group photograph and declare the workshop ended.

Results: The participants will leave the workshop with a sense of being part of a larger movement and feeling that their comics are interesting and important.



TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

Step 29 (after the workshop)

Description: Workshop report

Action: Prepare a short report on the workshop, stating the number of participants, their names and affiliations, the resource persons, the programme, the venue, etc. The report should also have samples of the comics made at the workshop. Send the report to the each participant.

Results: The participants will feel connected to the grassroots comics movement and be proud that their comics are part of it.

Remark: The report is important, as the activity of arranging comics workshops is so new and distributing reports is a good way of promoting the idea. Also make a web version of the report, if your organisation has a web-site.



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TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

Step 30: (after the workshop)
(page 25 in the manual)

Description: Distribution as strips in print media

Action: The original artwork of the wallposter comics can be reduced in a photocopier (50 %), then cut out and rearranged as a strip.

Results: the wallposter comic can also be used for print media.

Remark: You can also show how this is done in Photoshop, if possible. Scanning suggestion: 300 dpi grayscale (save as jpg).

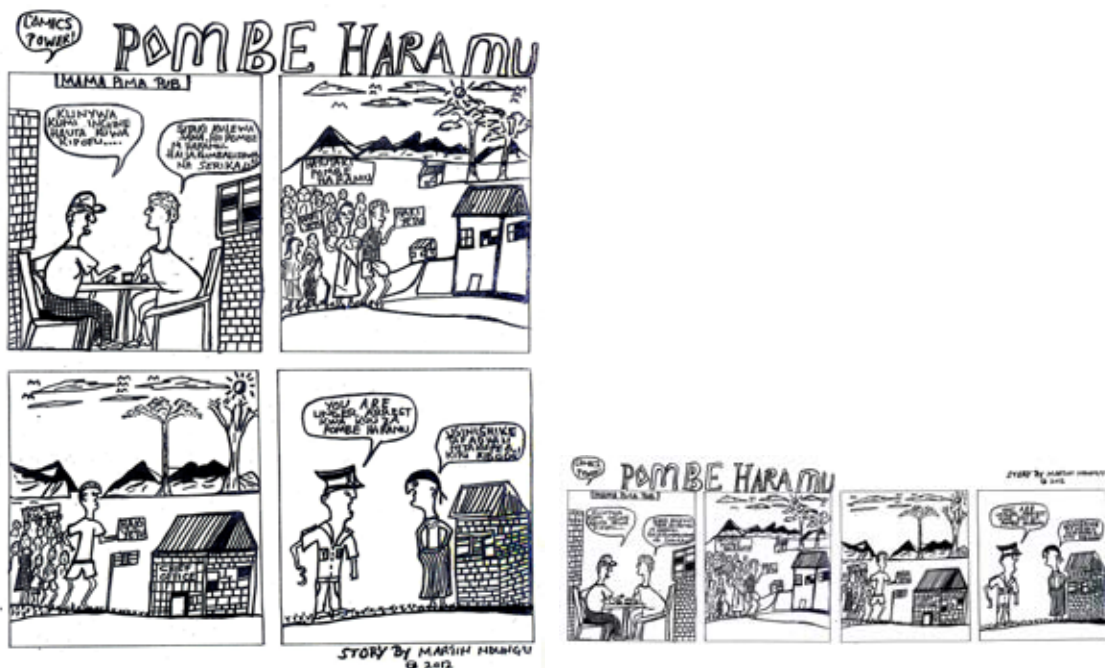


Illustration credit: Martin Ndugu, (Kenya)



TRAINER'S GUIDE FOR A WALLPOSTER COMICS WORKSHOP

Step 27 (after the workshop)

Description: Distribution as exhibitions at events

Action: The photocopies are mounted on cardboard and covered (optional) with polyethene film. The comics become an exhibition which can be displayed at special events, such as meetings, seminars, rallies etc.

Results: The comics will be displayed at events that gather people who are interested in issues of the society.

Remark: If you can afford to laminate the comics, the exhibition will be less bulky and very durable.



Appendix: Common errors in the visual scripts:



Order of speech balloons is wrong.



The one to the left should speak first.



The pointer of the balloon goes to the mouth.



It is enough if the pointer indicates the head area.



The man is standing on the panel border.



Just a tiny bit of empty space is enough.



Vast empty space for no reason.



The space filled harmoniously.



Too much text.



Same dialogue with less text.



Scribbled lettering.



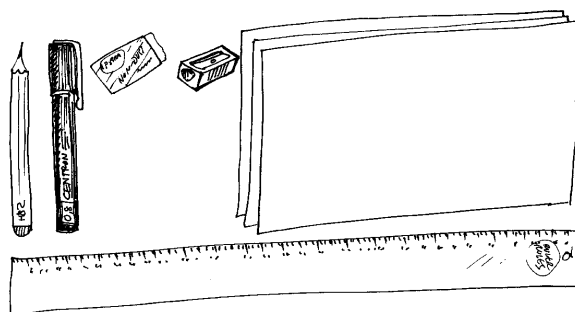
Readable lettering, spacious speech balloons.

Checklist of basic material requirements for a workshop:

1. A hall or a room that can accomodate all participants, remembering that they need space to draw. A whiteboard, blackboard or a flipchart is also needed.
2. Rough paper for sketching.
3. Pencils, erasers, sharpeners, and rulers (ordinary school material).
4. Inking pens: could be fibre-tipped, thin marker pens, gel pens, pigment ink pens, etc. You should test them first before buying any quantity.

Inking pen requirements: - proper black (not dark blue, brown or grey).
- the ink shouldn't smudge easily
(test the pens like this: first make pencil lines, then ink them, let them dry a little, and after that erase the pencil lines - the ink lines should still be intact).

5. Good paper for final artwork.
6. Access to a photocopying machine.
7. Tape, bluetack, pins and paste to put up the comics with.
8. Blank certificates.
9. Grassroots comics demonstration material such as samples, prints, photocopies, compilations, etc
10. Handouts, manuals, reports, flyers, etc.
11. If you can use a data projector, you can show pictures, pdfs, Powerpoint presentations, etc.





World Comics-Finland was founded by comics artists and aid activists in 1997. It has members and affiliates in a worldwide network. The main common interests are:

- local comics as an information tool in development and human rights work
- local comics as a mirror of culture
- comics as a medium for self-expression for special groups

World Comics arranges courses and comics workshops, lectures, and exhibitions. We have conducted workshops in cooperation with local organisations in India, Tanzania, Mozambique, Burundi, Kenya, Benin, Togo and Lebanon. We have also conducted many workshops and trainings in Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands, UK, Estonia and Latvia. We have in the last years concentrated mainly on training trainers for grassroots comics workshops.

World Comics-Finland

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