GUIDELINE TO ORGANISE AN ELEVATOR PITCH TRAINING
A crucial component in raising awareness for literacy difficulties is the use of convincing communication when being in contact with policy makers or other players connected to literacy. In order to activate them in taking up their role and starting actions towards solving literacy difficulties, an elevator pitch is a good method. The following guideline aims to support you in carrying out an elevator pitch training in your organisation.
2. ELINET’S ELEVATOR PITCH TRAINING

Information on how to carry out a successful elevator pitch was one of the outcomes outlined as useful from a survey carried out among ELINET members. As a result, the Elevator Pitch Training was developed. The tool provides you with guidelines on organising an elevator pitch training in your constituencies. It includes a PowerPoint presentation with instructions, two videos of pitch examples and proposes hand-outs regarding contact with policy makers and concrete pitch examples. The training could be used directly (training participants to use elevator pitch in their activities) and indirectly (training participants to use elevator pitch in their activities and who transfer the training to their colleagues).

A. The concept of an elevator pitch
An elevator pitch is a short verbal introduction of 30-90 seconds (150-225 words) that explains what you/your organisation does and how it can benefit your audience. The concept came from the idea of what you would say to a VIP (for example, your most important potential customer) if you bumped into them in an elevator, i.e. with a very limited time frame in which you need to tell them who you are, why they should work with you and succeed in getting a follow up meeting. An elevator pitch is not just about explaining who you are and what you do, but also about how this can help your listener achieve his/her own goals.

It is commonly used among start-ups to convince potential funders to invest in them. The model has now spread throughout all types of organisations. It can be used anywhere, anytime, to anybody. It does not need to be done in an elevator: anywhere you want to convey your own/your organisation’s value in a short time frame.

Apart from using an elevator pitch in a physical ‘meeting’, you can also use the method and basic structure of an elevator pitch as a way to strengthen your organisation’s communication by means of developing a short written statement that summarises who you are, what you do and how it can help someone.

B. Target audience: literacy practitioners and campaigners
The Elevator Pitch Training is directed at literacy-related organisations that work with literacy practitioners and campaigners and wish to train them in using an elevator pitch in their activities. To avoid misunderstanding, it is recommended to use selection criteria to define the profile of people participating in the training so that it can be fully exploited. Participants should ideally:
• Have the ability to quickly understand the issue.
• Be in contact with (or have the ability to make contact with those working with) policy makers/politicians.

When using the training to transfer to another organisation, the participants should ideally:
• Be in charge of training other people in their own organisation.
• Be able to transfer and adapt the training format to their local needs.

C. Objectives
The general objectives of the Elevator Pitch Training are twofold:
• Train members of your organisations to give an elevator pitch themselves (directly).
• Train participants (in or outside your organisations) to transfer the training to their colleagues using the Elevator Pitch Training (indirectly).

In both cases the specific objectives of the Elevator Pitch Training are:
• Providing participants with an understanding of what an elevator pitch is.
• Motivating participants to use elevator pitching in their activities.
• Practicing in giving and developing their own elevator pitch.
D. Preparing the training

In preparation of the training, think about the following:

- Allocate 1 to 2 hours for the training. The more time you have, the more time there is available for practicing pitching and making the participants feeling at ease with pitching, which is the most crucial part of the training.
- Make sure you have translated the hand-outs (see appendix) in your country’s national language and have them available for distribution at the end of the training.
- IT material: make sure you have organised the availability of a laptop, beamer, internet connection and speakers.
- Training material: make sure you have organised the availability of paper folded name signs to put on the table, flip board and markers.
3. **THE TRAINING STEP BY STEP**

The training is set up in the following structure. More detailed descriptions concerning the different components are included in the PowerPoint presentation.

**A. Short introduction**
Do a quick round of introductions, asking the participants to say their name and whether they prefer the stairs, an escalator or the elevator. The latter serves as an icebreaker and relaxed initiation of the training.

**B. Agenda**
The agenda is composed of the following points. The percentages reflect the advised time allocated to the different components.
- Introduction (5%)
- Objectives of the training (5%)
- Ice-breaker (5%)
- Theory – definition, key elements, structure, form and preparation (15%)
- Examples of elevator pitches (5-10%)
- Exercises – Practice makes perfect! (55-60%)
- More information and conclusion (5%)

**C. Objectives**
In this part you explain the objectives, namely:
- Giving participants an understanding of what an elevator pitch is.
- Motivating participants to use elevator pitches in their activities.
- Practicing in giving and developing their own elevator pitch.

**D. Icebreaker**
Before starting the training in which the contribution of the participants constitutes a major part, it is important to set a relaxed atmosphere. Within the PowerPoint slide 4 an icebreaker activity is proposed.

**E. Theory: What is an elevator pitch?**
In this part the definition and use of an elevator pitch is explained.

**F. Theory: Key elements of an elevator pitch**
Key elements of an elevator pitch are discussed: a good elevator pitch is concise, clear, compelling, credible, conceptual, concrete, customized, consistent and conversational.

**G. Theory: Structure of an elevator pitch**
The structure of an elevator pitch is explained.

**H. Theory: Pay attention to form**
In this part it is explained that you should not only focus on content but also on the form of your pitch, i.e. the verbal and non-verbal elements.

**I. Theory: Preparing your elevator pitch**
Guidance on the things to consider when preparing your pitch is provided.

**J. Pitch examples: video of a bad and a good pitch**
Two videos are provided to give the participants a concrete example of a bad (example 1: [youtu.be/_phjjsc8R4o](https://youtu.be/_phjjsc8R4o)) and a good pitch (example 2: [youtu.be/TW0QxgzaBFA](https://youtu.be/TW0QxgzaBFA)).
K. Practice makes perfect!
Exercises in elevator pitching including a warming up assignment and two actual pitch exercises are provided for the participants to practice with. Devote about 55 to 60% of your allocated time to practicing by giving people exercises that they can do first in pairs, and then by delivering their pitch to the whole audience.
The exercises take the form of role-play, and end with each participant doing a pitch. The practice slot needs to leave enough time for discussion with the participants between the exercises so that incremental evaluation is possible.

L. Further information
In this part you distribute hand-outs (see appendix) with further information regarding contact with policy makers, including more detailed advice on how to prepare a pitch for a policy maker.

M. Conclusion
Conclude the training with a reflection, asking what the participants will do with what they have learned.
There are a number of tools available that can be used in relation to your Elevator Pitch Training, namely:

- ELINET has developed a guideline to running an awareness raising campaign. This tool guides you through several steps and practical tips supporting you in developing your own awareness raising campaign: whether it is a large national campaign or a small local campaign, and whether it is organized by paid staff or by volunteers. One of the steps in this guideline is formulating key messages. The concept and method of an elevator pitch can be used to build campaign key messages. Find this here: [www.eli-net.eu/awareness-raising/toolkit/running-a-campaign/](http://www.eli-net.eu/awareness-raising/toolkit/running-a-campaign/).

- ELINET has developed templates to build up a factsheet for your country. A factsheet is a great way to introduce policy makers to literacy difficulties in their country, linking to actions that need to be taken to tackle the issue. You can hand over a factsheet as a conclusion of your elevator pitch and implement it in the Elevator Pitch Training. Find this here: [www.eli-net.eu/awareness-raising/toolkit/country-factsheets/](http://www.eli-net.eu/awareness-raising/toolkit/country-factsheets/).

- ELINET has compiled country reports for each European country where ELINET has one or more countries. Find the country reports here: [www.eli-net.eu/research/country-reports/](http://www.eli-net.eu/research/country-reports/).
  The information in these country reports can be used as basis for your elevator pitch and can thus be implemented in the Elevator Pitch Training.

- If you are unsure on the use of terminology in adult literacy, ELINET as produced guiding principles to be found here: [www.eli-net.eu/research/terminology/](http://www.eli-net.eu/research/terminology/).
APPENDIX 1
CONTACT WITH POLICY MAKERS

What is a policy maker and why are they important?
A policy maker is a member of a government department, legislature, or other organisation who is responsible for making new rules and laws. Policy makers are involved in and in some cases have the authority to formulate policies and set policy frameworks. As such, they have a strong influence on the structures, opportunities and practices in society as a whole and on literacy as a specific societal issue. These policy makers can be active on any level: national, regional or local. Policy makers are key players for at least 3 reasons:

- Decisions on the issues at stake at local/government level and how they relate to literacy.
- Align your objectives to the local/government ones.
- Liaise with them on literacy related issues and activities.

With literacy being a transversal and cross-sectional topic being in contact with policy makers involved in different policy areas is an important strategy to raise awareness on the issue. ELINET has identified the following policy areas it aims to address, namely culture, education, health, economics and employment and social welfare.

How should you prepare for your contact with a policy maker?
When planning to come in contact with policy makers, make sure to be informed about the (local) government’s involvement in topics related to literacy:

- Have an understanding of the government’s objectives.
- Have an understanding of the government’s policy priorities.
- Familiarize yourself with government’s proposals in relation to literacy.
- Know who is involved and what their involvement entails. what his/her knowledge level is, his/her expertise and/or what his/her standpoint is with regard to literacy.
- Know who is in the position or has the power to make real changes or put the issue of literacy on the policy agenda.

How can you come into contact with policy makers?
After having studied the (local) government proposal (or lack of proposals) in relation to literacy, contact can be taken in the following ways:

- Attend public debates to make your face known.
- Attend events of interest to policy makers.
- Make yourself known within the network of policy makers by arranging meetings with their partners and being involved in the activities of this network.
- Make a phone call with the relevant person and ask for a short appointment.
- Send an official letter or email requesting a meeting on a specific topic.
- Meet at events, hand over a business card and follow-up by sending an email.
- Consult the policy maker to provide your opinion on a literacy issue.
- Respond to public consultation and follow-up with the service in charge.
- Invite policy makers to your events and give them a special role.

To sum up: establish good contacts with policy makers to achieve your aim of a fully literate society.
APPENDIX 1

How should you position yourself?
Policy makers can have broad portfolios, and it is important to build your work on trust. In this realm it is important to position yourself as a partner:

- Build trust through openness and clarity.
- Share important information.
- Anticipate concerns.
- Provide evidence or a base for the issue/problem (including severity and impact) and give detailed information on the solution (including cost and timescale).
- Make clear how it aligns with the current policy.
- React quickly to policy makers’ requests, always acknowledge receipt of their requests and look for the more appropriate answer to it.
APPENDIX 2
ELEVATOR PITCH EXAMPLES

Social welfare and employment
If a stakeholder or a policy maker was discussing social welfare and employment at a conference, start your conversation with:

‘Good afternoon, my name is [...]. I was really interested to hear your comments about social welfare and the importance of basic skills to support people to find employment. It's great to know that you are making this area a priority. I work with the [...] and we are currently looking at how literacy affects employment and learning opportunities. We know people with weak literacy skills are more likely to be unemployed. They are also less likely to take up training opportunities. In fact, low-skilled adults risk being trapped in a situation in which they rarely benefit from adult learning, and their skills remain weak or deteriorate over time. To achieve your policy goals you could really benefit from our work. Would it be possible to meet you some day to discuss supporting your actions?’

Health
If a stakeholder or a policy maker was discussing health issues at a seminar, start your conversation with:

‘Good afternoon, my name is [...]. I found your talk about health very interesting, especially the work your department is doing in relation to health skills. I work with [...] on the link between literacy and health skills. Did you know that in comparison people with low literacy skills are more likely to die at a younger age and are at an increased risk of poorer health throughout their life? Also patients who have better literacy skills are more likely to comply with their medication and as a result have improved health outcomes. So investing in improving literacy is crucial for improving health skills. We are working with a lot of different stakeholders to advance the area of literacy so it would be great to meet you to show you how you can benefit from our work. Would you like to make an appointment?’

Education
If a stakeholder or a policy maker was discussing education issues, start your conversation with:

‘Good afternoon, my name is [...]. I was very interested to hear you talk about children's literacy levels. I work with [...] and we have done a lot of work on the importance of parental involvement in children's education. To achieve your policy goals, parental involvement is crucial. Our research shows that parent's involvement in children's education in the early years has more of an impact in educational outcomes than anything the school does. However, parents who have difficulty around literacy experience barriers to be involved. Therefore, the creation of an education system that supports all parents to be able to help their children helps you in achieving your goals. It would be great if you had time to meet us so we could share our work in this area as I think there are some very quick ‘wins’ we could achieve.’
**Libraries**

If a stakeholder or a policy maker was discussing the role of libraries at a conference, start your conversation with:

‘Good afternoon, my name is [...] I really enjoyed your presentation, especially your thoughts on the role of libraries in communities and your goals to promote literacy through libraries. I work with [...] and we are active within the field of literacy promotion. Libraries have a unique opportunity to promote literacy and reading, with children, teenagers, adults and families. However, our research shows that more disadvantaged people, for example those with poor literacy skills, don’t necessarily use their local library. Therefore, we are working on ways to promote libraries with these groups. It would be great if we could meet you to discuss some of our ideas as we think by working together and sharing best practices, we can support even more people to use their local library and you to achieve your goal of positioning libraries as local communities.’