



اتحاد الغرف التجارية الصناعية الزراعية الفلسطينية
Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture



How to Write a Position Paper

Ann Williams



What We Will Cover

WHAT IS A POSITION PAPER?

WHY HAVE A POSITION PAPER?

BENEFITS OF WRITING A POSITION PAPER

WHO WRITES A POSITION PAPER?

CHOOSING A TOPIC

What We Will Cover

KNOW THE AUDIENCE

RESEARCHING THE TOPIC

CHOOSING A VIEW

CHOOSING A SPOKESPERSON

POSITION PAPER STRUCTURES

What We Will Cover

ONE STRUCTURE FOR A POSITION PAPER

HEADER

INTRODUCTION

OPPOSER'S VIEW (SUMMARY)

OPPOSER'S VIEW (LIMITATIONS)

CLUSTER'S POSITION

COUNTER ARGUMENTS

WHY THE CLUSTER'S POSITION IS BETTER

CONCLUSION

Who has heard about “Position Paper”?

**Who knows what about “Position
Papers”?**

What is a Position Paper?

What Is a Position Paper?

POSITION PAPER

**A concise brief or statement
on a specific topic
and the position (i.e. view)
that a person or entity takes on that topic
for later discussion
in an appropriate open forum
(e.g. a committee, conference)**

**It is sometimes
called a
Positioning Paper,
Argument Essay or
Amicus Brief**

In the Context of the PSDCP

- **Position Papers are likely to:**

- **Establish the view of a cluster**
- **On how it would like a specific topic or issue to be addressed by government**
- **In order to help the cluster improve its competitiveness or market access**

- **They will be presented to government as part of a PPD process which is in line with the “Recommended PPD Mechanism for Clusters in Palestine”**

Why Have a Position Paper?

Why Have a Position Paper?

**TO HELP CONVINC
AN AUDIENCE
THAT A PARTICULAR VIEW IS
VALID
AND
WORTH LISTENING
TO**

How Does It Do This?

- It fairly ***explains two sides of an issue*** - your view and that of the person you are trying to change
- It ***highlights the differences*** between them using solid reasoning and factual evidence to validate claims
- It ***argues for your view*** over the other
- It ***persuades that your view is better***
- To do this effectively, it addresses potential counter arguments to show that you are ***well informed about both sides***

Commentaries v. Position Papers

- A Commentary usually only expresses the author's personal opinion about an issue



- A Position Paper explains both sides and discusses why one is stronger or better than the other



Benefits of Writing a Position Paper

Benefits of a Position Paper

- Writing a Position Paper helps a cluster to organize its thoughts and focus its efforts on undertaking appropriate research
- It also provides a framework for effectively presenting the cluster's view to a target audience



What Happens to It?

- All target audience attendees get a copy
- If it is being presented at a forum, it is submitted to the Secretariat before the deadline so that the Secretariat can distribute it, and invitees can brief themselves before it is presented and a dialogue begins



Who Writes the Position Paper?

Who Writes the Position Paper?

- PPD in the PSDCP is bottom-up driven from cluster MSME level to government to allow....
- The **clusters to choose the issues** they want to be addressed, **produce their own Position Papers** and **recommend the changes they want**
- The **clusters will present their Position Papers at a Permanent PPD Forum**
- This is a **new PPD process** especially designed for clusters
- It has been **approved by the MoNE and FPCCIA**

Who Writes the Position Paper?

- The cluster will create a Focus Group to write the Position Paper
- Focus Groups may have Working Groups and Technical Committees to support if required
- All activity will have the ***support and guidance of the National Expert for PPD and Cluster Animator*** during the lifetime of the PSDCP, and also National Experts where appropriate
- Thereafter, support and guidance is intended to come from the Chambers

Choosing a Topic

Choosing a Topic

- **Firstly, identify potential topic ideas:**
 - For example, by brainstorming for cluster problems with cluster members at a workshop
- **Prioritize ideas generated to create a short-list:**
 - For example, by using a simple voting system such as a show of hands



Choosing a Topic

- Identify some potential solutions (i.e. views) for the short-listed topics:
 - Brainstorming again?
- Examine these and select one topic (and one potential view) to take forward

**THE TOPIC
SELECTED MUST
BE STRONG**



Assessing Strength

- To ensure the topic / view is strong and you will be able to present a strong argument, ask:
 - Is the topic real, with genuine controversy and uncertainty?
 - Is it interesting?
 - Is its scope and the likely ensuing discussion narrow enough to be manageable?
 - Will there be enough material to support your view?



Assessing Strength

- Will you be able to manage the amount of work and material needed to justify it?
- Are there two or more distinct, opposing views that could be taken?
- Will it enable you to assert something specific, make a recommendation and propose a plan of action?
- Is the cluster agreed on the topic?
- Is the cluster interested in advocating on this view?



Know the Audience

Know the Audience

- Before starting, consider the target audience:
 - Who is it (e.g. a body such as a CCIA, a group of bodies such as a Ministerial Committee, both)?
 - What does it represent?
 - What is / are their mandates / agendas?
 - Who are the individuals?
 - What else do they do and what are their beliefs?
 - Where are they likely to stand on the topic?
 - Do they have interests that might influence their views (e.g. political leanings, own businesses)?

Know the Audience

- The two most important questions are:

WHAT EVIDENCE IS LIKELY
TO BE EFFECTIVE WITH
THEM?

HOW BEST CAN THIS BE
PRESENTED?

Know the Audience

- Consider your audience and your own view and choose the position you will actually take
- “Considering your audience” does not mean “playing up to it”
 - to convince someone that your view is good, you need to consider his / her ***way of thinking***
- Think about the terms you will use, if you will need to explain them, the background information you might supply and the details needed to convince



Researching the Topic

Researching the Topic

- Research the topic, develop your view and aim to ensure arguments are:
 - Logically derived
 - Well supported with factual information
 - Agreed by consensus of the cluster
- Beware of those writing Position Papers who have strong preconceived views and opinions



Views that are not well developed and supported can cause dialogue to deteriorate

Evidence Forms

- **Facts** - information that is verifiable
- **Statistical inferences** - interpretation and examples of facts
- **Informed opinions** - developed through research and / or experts on the topic or view
- **Personal testimony** (e.g. a respected knowledgeable person)



Evidence Sources

- **Online:**

- Factual sources
- Statistics and databases
- Avoid biased sources (e.g. blogs)



- **Media:**

- Television documentaries
- Radio broadcasts

These often address two sides in a journalistic way



Evidence Sources

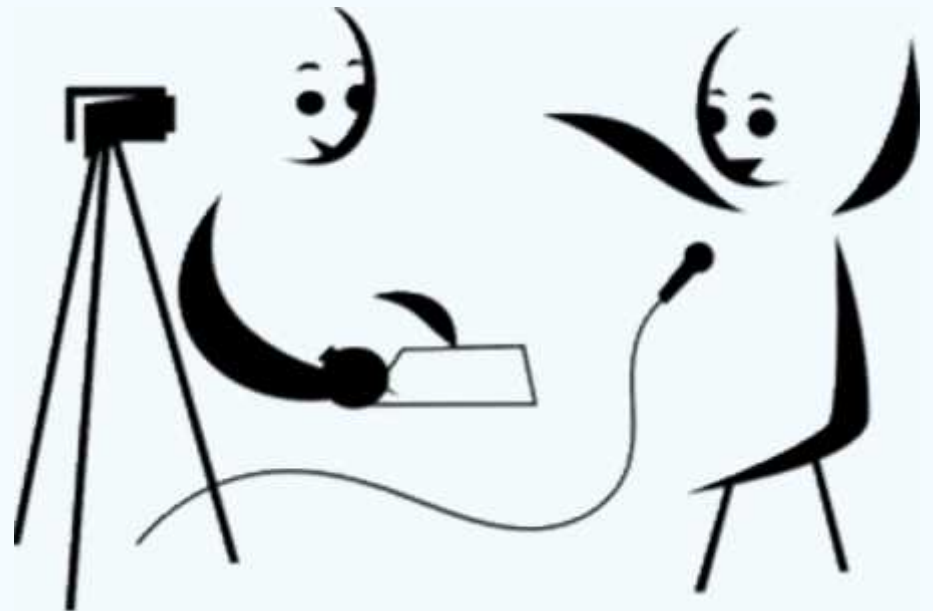
- **Print:**
 - Newspapers
 - Magazines
 - Books
 - In-depth studies
 - Government reports
 - Directories
 - Handbooks
 - Encyclopaedias
 - Statistical reports
 - Association reports
 - Academic articles and journals



Evidence Sources

- **Empirical:**
 - Do field observations
 - Conduct surveys
 - Interview experts

**Interviewing those
with opposing views
can be very
informative!**



Researching the Topic

Tip



**Use credible, unbiased information.
Sources that make a
strong argument
for a view are fine, but
make sure they are backed up with
FACTS, DATA AND SOLID EVIDENCE**

Choosing a View

Choosing a View

- Identify the major points on which the cluster and its opposer disagree:
 - Draw up two columns:
 - » In one, write “Cluster Position” and list the arguments to support the cluster’s case
 - » In the other, write “Opposing Position” and list the arguments which can be used to support that case *from the opposer’s perspective*. What is its strongest arguments? What could it say to defend its position?
 - Brainstorming again?

Handout 2.1

“For and Against List (Example)”

For and Against List (Example)

CLUSTER POSITION	OPPOSING POSITION
People should not be able to carry guns	People should be able to carry guns
Shootings in public places are rare. The public will feel less safe if they know some people are carrying guns. Accidents happen. Police do not want guns. Some people will carry guns without a permit. Parents will fear letting their children out. In a shooting, police cannot tell criminals from people with guns who are defending themselves. Bullets may mistakenly hit innocent people. Young people are less mature and may use guns to threaten others or play games. Guns left somewhere (e.g. in cars) will not be any use in a shooting. Guns could be stolen and misused. Less stable persons are those most interested in carrying guns. More mentally ill people are in the community these days. Security can be strengthened if areas are perceived to become unsafe. It only takes minutes for police to arrive at an incident.	Shootings in public places are increasing. People will feel more confident and less scared. Parents will not fear letting their children out. Gun accidents are very rare. People will carry guns anyway. The ability to defend yourself is a human right. People who could end shootings will have a gun. A shooting could be ended quickly. Violent people would think twice about shooting. Public places would not be such easy targets for shooters. People with guns are licensed. The only way to stop someone with a gun is to use a gun. People will be able to go out and feel safer at night.

Points of Contention

POINT OF CONTENTION

A point on which you and the opposing position disagree

- On your “For and Against List”, the major views on which the cluster and opposer are likely to disagree are the “Points of Contention”

Identifying Points of Contention

CLUSTER POSITION	OPPOSING POSITION
People should not be able to carry guns Shootings in public places are rare. The public will feel less safe if they know some people are carrying guns. Accidents happen. Police do not want guns. Some people will carry guns without a permit. Parents will fear letting their children out. In a shooting, police cannot tell criminals from people with guns who are defending themselves. Bullets may mistakenly hit innocent people. Young people are less mature and may use guns to threaten others or play games. Guns left somewhere (e.g. in cars) will not be any use in a shooting. Guns could be stolen and misused. Less stable persons are those most interested in carrying guns. More mentally ill people are in the community these days. Security can be strengthened if areas are perceived to become unsafe. It only takes minutes for police to arrive at an incident.	People should be able to carry guns Shootings in public places are increasing. People will feel more confident and less scared. Parents will not fear letting their children out. Gun accidents are very rare. People will carry guns anyway. The ability to defend yourself is a human right. People who could end shootings will have a gun. A shooting could be ended quickly. Violent people would think twice about shooting. Public places would not be such easy targets for shooters. People with guns are licensed. The only way to stop someone with a gun is to use a gun. People will be able to go out and feel safer at night.

Choosing a View

- Is the cluster's view specific enough?
- How will it benefit the cluster (e.g. improve competitiveness, increase market access)?
- Who will be the audience to which the Position Paper will be presented?
- How well will the cluster's view be able to be supported, and defended when challenged?
- Will be enough solid evidence to counter opposing views and persuade the audience that the cluster's view is better?

Choosing a View

- Can there be a recommended action and action plan?
- Is there enough evidence to support the view?
- Can the amount of evidence likely to be needed be managed?
- Finally, make an informed decision and choose the view the cluster will actually take



More Benefits of Position Papers

- Position Paper writers improve understanding of counter arguments which may be put forward
- Position Papers can be strengthened to better support the cluster's view
- Spokespersons can be better prepared for and able to counter these arguments when presenting Position Papers



Choosing a Spokesperson

What Does a Spokesperson Do?

- **A spokesperson:**
 - **Presents the Position Paper**
 - **Put forwards the cluster's view**
 - **Takes this view him/herself**
 - **Supports the cluster's view with evidence**
 - **Persuades the audience of its validity based on well-founded knowledge of the topic**
 - **Validates claims made in the Position Paper**
 - **Counters the arguments raised**
 - **Reinforces the cluster's view**
 - **Shows that s/he is well informed about all sides**

What Use is the Position Paper?

- The Position Paper is invaluable to the spokesperson for:
 - Preparing the speech
 - Presenting the topic and cluster's view confidently
 - Ensuring that the cluster's view is made clear
 - Getting buy-in from the audience as s/he shares information and the cluster's view with it
 - Facilitating an effective discussion
 - ***Negotiating a compromise***

Ask If the Spokesperson

- Is *interested* in speaking on behalf of the cluster and advocating the cluster's view
- Has the *authority* to speak on the cluster's behalf
- Is *confident* enough
- Can *speak and present* well
- Is able to *manage a discussion* where opposing views are presented
- Is well *informed*
- Is *respected*
- Is *assertive but not aggressive*
- Possesses good *negotiation skills*
- Will have his / her results *accepted by the cluster*



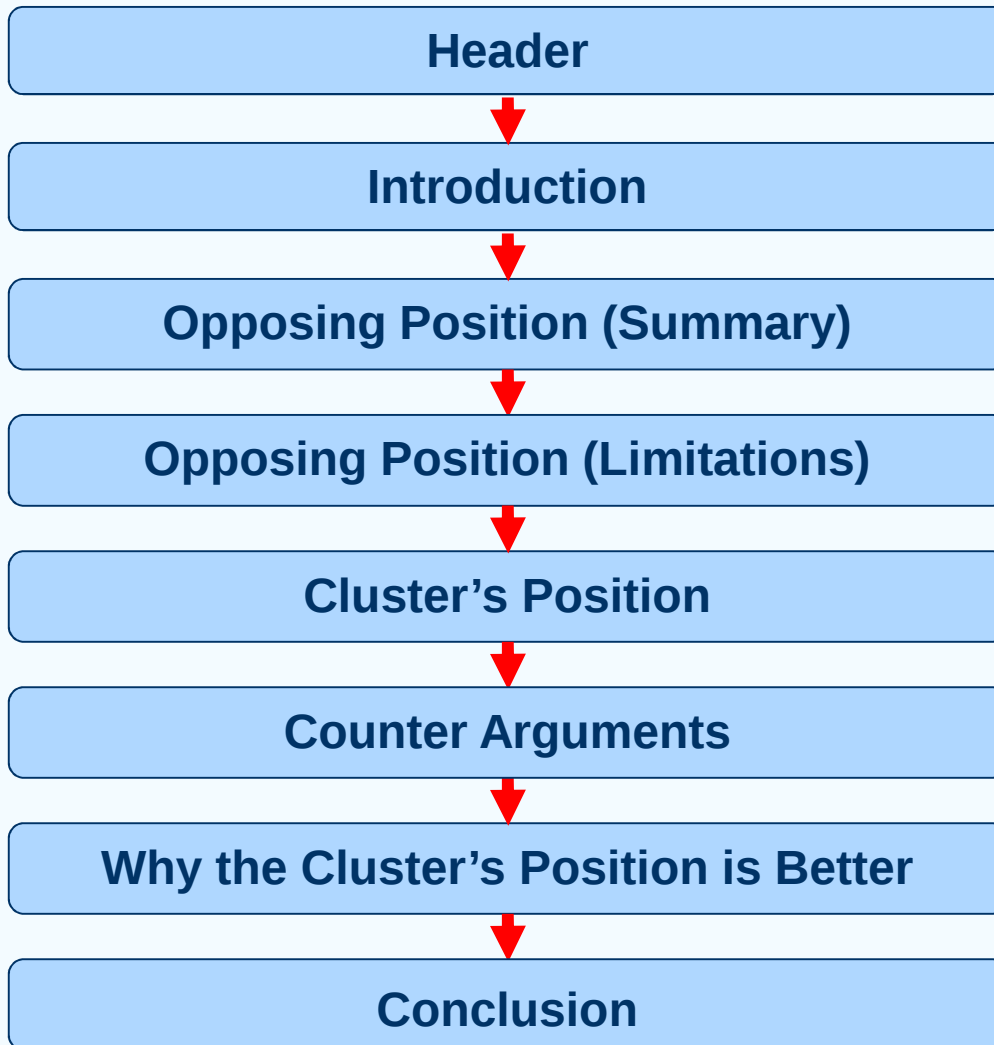
Position Paper Structures

Structure of a Position Paper

- There are many different structures to choose from when developing Position Papers
- Choose one to fit the context, topic, the cluster's view, its purpose and the audience



Structure of a Position Paper

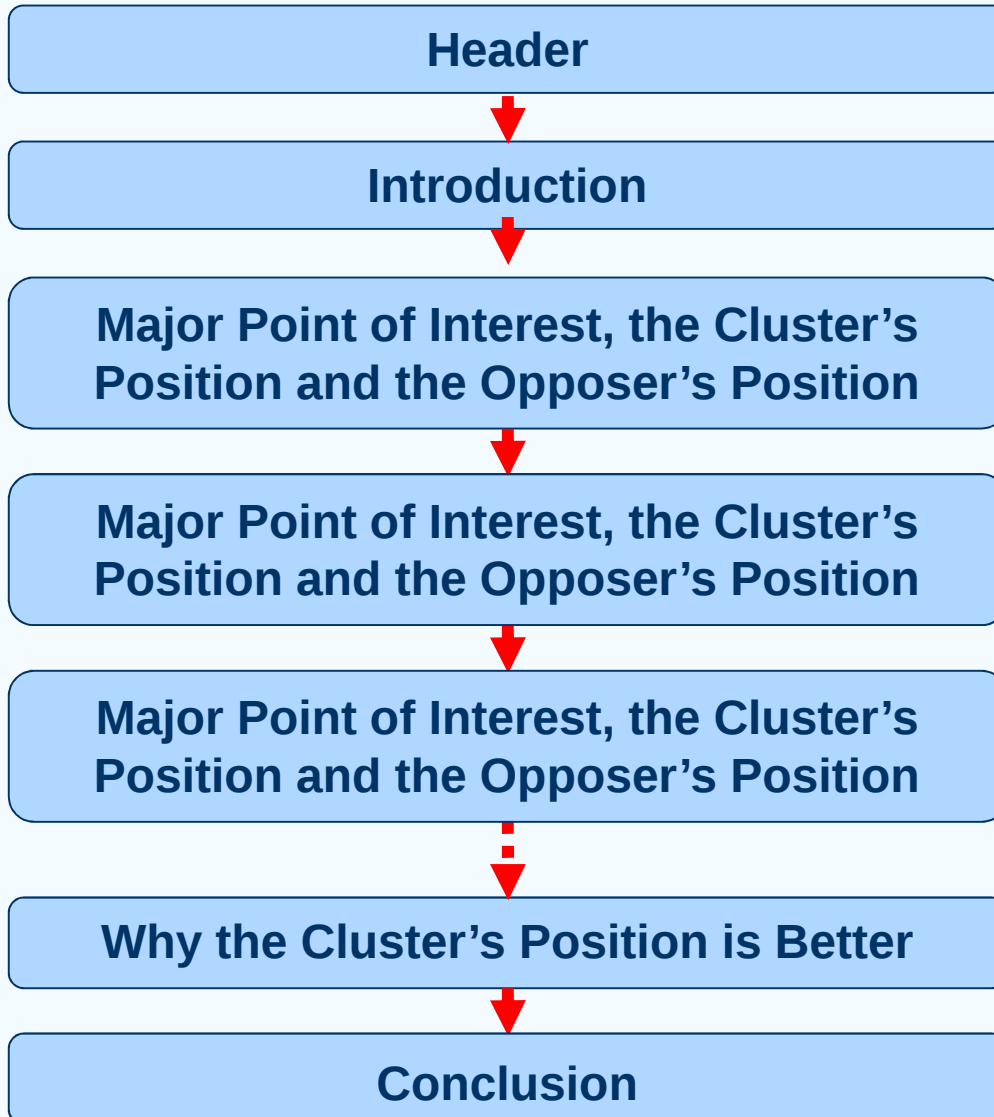


TYPE 1

The opposing view and its limitations are described,

then your view and its strengths explained and the counter arguments addressed

Structure of a Position Paper



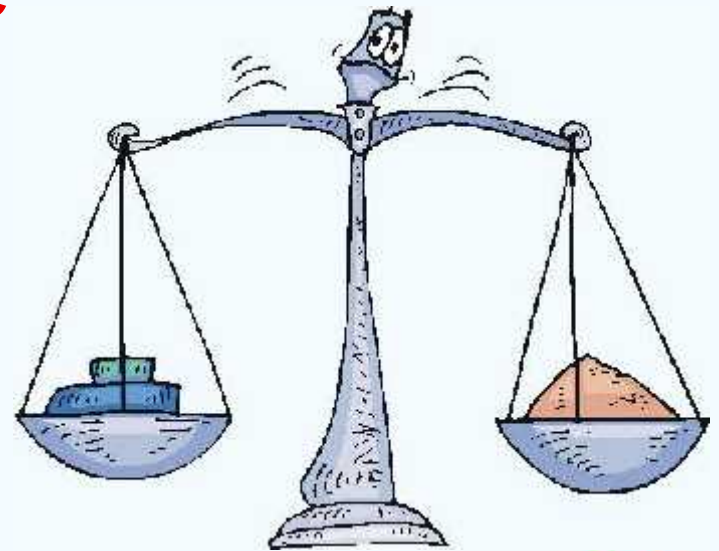
TYPE 2

A point-by-point comparison explaining why your view is better than the opposing view,

then your view is explained and its strengths

Structure of a Position Paper

- To win over the audience, argue *fairly, objectively and reasonably*
- The strongest Position Papers present both views as fairly, objectively and reasonably as possible, and then *persuade the audience that one view is better than the other*
- If the audience thinks the Position Paper is distorting the opposing view, it might doubt the trustworthiness of the cluster's view



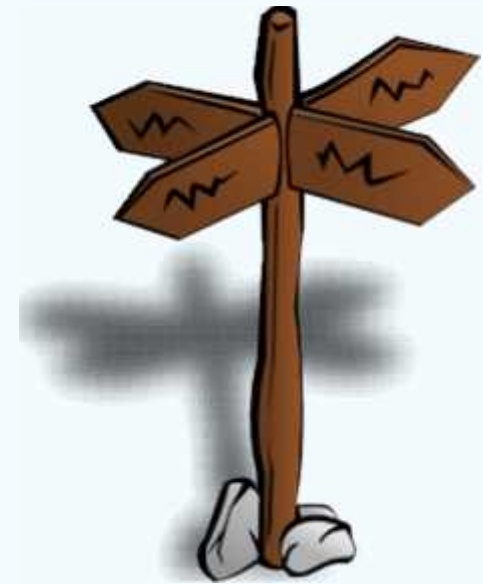
Structure of a Position Paper

- Let facts, evidence and reasoning do the talking
- If the cluster's view is truly stronger, you should be able to explain both views fairly and demonstrate why the cluster's view is better
- With some topics, there may be more than two possible views. Type 1 can be expanded to include summaries and limitations of the others if needed



Structure of a Position Paper

- However, try to reduce the issue down to two major views to make it easy for your readers to keep track of the arguments you present
- As you draft the Position Paper, you may decide a different structure is better for your circumstances
- There is no “Right Way”
- Whichever structure is chosen, ***the key is to talk about both views as fairly as possible***



One Structure for a Position Paper

Header

Header

- Name of the spokesperson
- Cluster represented
- Cluster location (city, governorate + country)
- Body the issue is to be raised with
- Topic that will be presented for discussion

Spokesperson:	Mohammed Jaradat
Cluster:	Dairy Products Cluster of Jenin
Location:	Jenin, Palestine
Body:	Permanent PPD Forum for Clusters in Palestine
Topic:	“Cost of milk production in Palestine is too high and this is encouraging imports of and reducing demand for locally produced milk”

Introduction

Introduction

- Use this to set the framework for the Position Paper
- Identify and introduce the topic
- Provide a background to the topic to help readers understand what is being written about (e.g. historical background, cause(s) of the issue, those effected by it and the effect(s) on them). Tries to grab the reader's attention
- State the cluster's purpose clearly - tells the readers that the Position Paper will explain two views of the topic and demonstrate why the cluster's view is better
- Lead into a statement on the cluster's view

Stating the Cluster's View

- Stating the cluster's view in the introduction has some advantages:
 - The audience immediately and clearly knows where the cluster stands
 - The cluster's view is in one of the sections that people read first (i.e. first and last)
 - It is a common format for academic argument, and familiar to many
- Or you can leave it until the conclusion - good if the audience is expected to be difficult to persuade

Opposer's Position (Summary)

Opposer's Position (Summary)

- Focus on external involvement in the topic
- Mention relevant actions undertaken by external bodies regarding the topic in the past (e.g. resolutions, declarations, programmes, conferences, etc)
- Focus on the bodies in the audience
- Discuss any existing policies relating to the topic



Opposer's Position (Summary)

- Explain the opposer's view of the topic in a straightforward way:
 - There is no need to argue for the opposing side, but explain its view in a way that the audience will consider fair, objective and reasonable
- Use quotes from the opposer's arguments to explain its view:
 - Paraphrasing or summarizing the opposer's argument is acceptable, as long as it is done fairly

Opposer's Position (Limitations)

Opposer's Position (Limitations)

- Explain the limitations of the opposer's view:
 - What is missing?
 - What has not been considered?
 - What has been ignored in the argument?
- Highlight limitations as objectively as possible
- Do not be sarcastic or dismissive
- Fairly point out the weaknesses of the opposing view



Cluster's Position

Cluster's Position

- Inform on what the cluster has done concerning the topic. For example:
 - Undertaken a market research study
 - Attended a conference
 - Sponsored a resolution
 - Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a supporting body (e.g. research centre, university, PalTrade, specialised union)
 - Adopted internal cluster policies / strategies
 - Etc



Cluster's Position

- Take the audience by the hand through a few Points of Contention. For each:
 - Explain *and show* why the cluster's view is better
 - Use sources to back up argument
 - Use good reasoning, examples, facts and data to prove the cluster's view is more credible



Counter Arguments

Counter Arguments

- Know the opposer's view as well as the cluster's
- The Position Paper must present the opposer's view and erode it with counter evidence
- Know all possible counter arguments that may be raised:
 - Refer to your "For and Against List"
 - Ask what someone who disagrees with the cluster's view might say about each point made in the Position Paper, *or about the cluster's position as a whole*

Counter Arguments

- Summarize the counter arguments. Present each one fairly and objectively
- Address each one in turn, provide supporting evidence and then:
 - Show why they are not sound and reject them **OR**
 - Concede your opposer has a point, but explain why the cluster's view is stronger
- Restate evidence to support the cluster's view
- Show that the cluster has seriously considered many views on the topic

Counter Arguments

- It is better to consider one or two significant counter arguments in detail rather than provide a long superficial list and replies
- Ensure that the cluster's replies reflect and are consistent with the cluster's view
- If a counter argument changes the cluster's view, revise the original argument accordingly



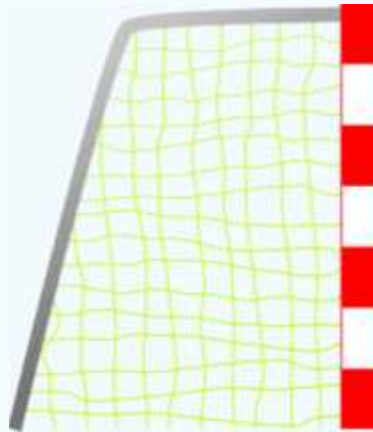
**Why the Cluster's
Position is Better**

Why Cluster's Position is Better

- Compare and contrast the opposer's view with the cluster's by picking 3+ points for argument
- Consider each and show why the cluster's view is better:
 - Provide a general statement of the cluster position
 - Elaborate using references, documents, source data, past experiences and authoritative testimony
 - Provide support / proof (preferably 5+ sources)
 - Give the cluster's educated and informed opinion
 - Conclude by restating the cluster's position

The Goal

- To show that the cluster's view is stronger ***on balance***, so you can concede some points to the opposer if needed



- You are trying show that ***the cluster's view has more strengths and fewer weaknesses*** than the opposer's view

When Writing

- Establish flow from paragraph to paragraph
- Think how you will keep your voice active
- Quote sources to establish authority
- Stay focused on the cluster's view throughout
- Focus on logical arguments
- Do not lapse into summary - do this in the conclusion!

Conclusion

Conclusion

- *Is the **most crucial part of the Position Paper***
- Restates the cluster's view - drives it home
- Elaborates the cluster's view based on past and present actions of bodies concerned with the topic
- Puts forward a constructive proposal(s) for dealing with the topic
- Shows how the cluster's view provides a brighter future than the opposer's view
- Provides a plan of action

Tips

- Summarize, then conclude your argument
- Do not introduce any new information
- The simplest and most basic conclusion restates the cluster's view in different words and discusses its implications
- Refer to the first paragraph and opening statements as well as the main points
- Restate the main ideas clearly
- Reflect the succession and importance of the arguments logically and conclude their development

Last Words

Last Words

- A Position Paper should contain at least 5 primary sources of information to support the proposed view. These should be referenced in the text and appear in a reference list at the end of the paper. Use an internationally acknowledged referencing system (e.g. Harvard)
- It should be no more than 5 single sided pages (excluding cover sheet and reference page)
- Use Ariel (10 point), one and a half line spacing and leave a line between paragraphs

Handout 2.2

“Position Paper (Carrying Guns for
Self Defence)”

Handout 2.3

“Position Paper (Free Primary Healthcare
in Humanitarian Crises)”

Any Questions?



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Handout 2.4

“How to Write a Position Paper (Slides)”



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Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture



Thank You for your Attention



Sources

Adapted from:

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HANDOUT 2.1 - FOR AND AGAINST LIST (EXAMPLE)

CLUSTER POSITION	OPPOSING POSITION
People should not be able to carry guns	People should be able to carry guns
Shootings in public places are increasing.	Shootings are rare.
The public will feel less safe if they know some people are carrying guns.	People will feel more confident and less scared.
Accidents happen.	Parents will not fear letting their children out.
Police do not want guns.	Gun accidents are very rare.
Some people will carry guns without a permit.	People will carry guns anyway.
Parents will fear letting their children out.	The ability to defend yourself is a human right.
In a shooting, police cannot tell criminals from people with guns who are defending themselves.	People who could end shootings will have a gun.
Bullets may mistakenly hit innocent people.	A shooting could be ended quickly.
Young people are less mature and may use guns to threaten others or play games.	Violent people would think twice about shooting.
Guns left somewhere (e.g. in cars) will not be any use in a shooting.	Public places would not be such easy targets for shooters.
Guns could be stolen and misused.	People with guns are licensed.
Less stable persons are those most interested in carrying guns.	The only way to stop someone with a gun is to use a gun.
More mentally ill people are in the community these days.	People will be able to go out and feel safer at night.
Security can be strengthened if areas are perceived to become unsafe.	
It only takes minutes for police to arrive at an incident.	

Source: Adapted from R. Johnson-Sheehan and C. Paine, 2009. "Writing Today". Ch. 11. London: Longman. Available at: <http://www.pearsonhighered.com/showcase/johnson-sheehan/assets/ch11.pdf> Accessed 25.11.2014]

HANDOUT 2.2 - POSITION PAPER (CARRYING GUNS FOR SELF DEFENCE)

Carrying Guns for Self-Defence is a Humanitarian Right

A woman leaving her work late one evening walks along the poorly lit street to the car park - it is a long, cold walk in the dark, and she grows nervous as shadows begin lurking in the distance. Suddenly, someone jumps out in front of her and immediately threatens force. Before she can react, she is raped and robbed. This is a very frightening scenario, and it seems that every week there are newspaper reports citing another attack on women somewhere in the town. However, all of these attacks could be prevented if we allow all people to carry guns as a means of self-defence.

Although safety is my biggest concern, there are other arguments that point to this solution as well.

First, it is everyone's humanitarian right to defend themselves. Debates have occurred about how this should be interpreted, but I believe it means that if law abiding, trained and eligible citizens would like to carry a gun and use it in self-defence, they should be able to. Currently, this is not the case. "The law, as it stands now, only allows carrying of guns for selected persons," said John Jones, leader of Rights to Carry Arms (CRA). According to the June 2010 Safety and Security Bulletin in Section 3.2, "Non-regulated drugs, explosives, guns and ammunition are permitted for eligible persons". As this rule excludes me, I believe, it is a violation of my humanitarian rights.

The second reason guns should be allowed is because it will give people, such as the one in the scenario, a sense of security and comfort when they are in an uncomfortable situation or place. The opposition would say that although the person with the gun is comfortable, it makes others around them feel uncomfortable or afraid to go out. Well, let me ask the question: How often do you feel uncomfortable or frightened about someone near you having a gun when you go to a cinema? Probably not too often. However, according to Jones, 3% of the population carries a gun. "That means that every time you go to the cinema and there are around 200 people inside, you are potentially sitting with six people that have got a gun on them," Jones said. There are people all around us that have guns, and it seems to be handled just fine. After all, the 3% that do carry guns have to meet certain requirements - guns are not handed out to just anyone.

The nation's law requires everyone to have a permit in order to own a handgun, and to obtain one you must be 21 years of age, be a citizen of the country, have obtained training in the safe use of a pistol, not be a felon, not have a domestic violence offence in the last 10 years, not be a person convicted of stalking, as well as many other restrictions. You can find these laws on the Ministry of Justice's web site.

The third reason that guns should be allowed to be carried by people who obtain a permit is that it could prevent a tragic shooting like the one at the State University a couple of years ago. "Our best and our brightest people are unprotected and essentially run the risk every day of being injured or killed," said Keith Moum in an article in the Daily News in January of this year. People currently have no way to defend themselves and if guns were allowed, this tragedy may have been averted or at least minimized.

So, in order to our country a safe, comfortable environment for everyone, we need to give everyone that wishes to the ability to carry a gun. Not only will it make the person carrying the gun feel safe, it can potentially prevent a tragic shooting, a robbery or a rape. It is our humanitarian right. It is our right to demand it.

Source: Adapted from R. Johnson-Sheehan and C. Paine, 2009. *Writing Today*. Ch. 11. London: Longman. Available at: <http://www.pearsonhighered.com/showcase/johnson-sheehan/assets/ch11.pdf> Accessed 25.11.2014]

HANDOUT 2.3 - POSITION PAPER (FREE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IN HUMANITARIAN CRISES)

Removing User Fees for Primary Health Care Services During Humanitarian Crises

Global Health Cluster, March 2010

The Global Health Cluster, under the leadership of the World Health Organization, is made up of more than 30 international humanitarian health organizations that have been working together over the past four years to build partnerships and mutual understanding and to develop common approaches to humanitarian health action.

Introduction

This paper, produced by the Global Health Cluster, provides guidance to policy-makers and other health actors for the removal of user fees for the provision of primary health care (PHC) services during humanitarian crises. Reflecting international consensus, it provides guidance for humanitarian agencies for reducing the financial barriers to access to PHC services by removing user fees and the risks imposed by user fees, i.e. catastrophic health expenditures. It is based on the humanitarian principle of impartiality and on human rights, which state that humanitarian interventions should be provided 'based on needs alone', be accessible without discrimination, and be affordable for all.¹ Therefore, humanitarian aid must not introduce or support a financing mechanism for which sufficient evidence exists that indicates that it has negative effects on access to PHC for the most vulnerable and excluded groups.

Universal access to PHC is a fundamental element of any humanitarian health response for populations affected by crises.² During humanitarian crises, PHC services are designed to cover the priority health needs of the affected population, including referral to secondary healthcare facilities and the treatment of more complex cases.^{3,4}

Problem Statement

Healthcare user fees are defined as a financing mechanism that often involves payment by beneficiaries at the point of service delivery. In this paper, user fees refer to formal as well as informal

payments for basic and higher level services, drugs, diagnostic investigations, medical supplies, entrance or consultation fees or a combination of these.⁵

Direct charges to users of health services have been implemented since the 1980s by many countries as part of the implementation of the Bamako Initiative, in the context of the structural adjustment policies of the World Bank and the IMF. Numerous studies have analysed the impact of user fees across a range of different settings.⁶ The core messages from this research include: 1) User fees impede access to health care - they typically add to the cost of health services faced by patients and result in poor and vulnerable population groups not always seeking appropriate health care when it is needed; 2) Waivers and exemption policies as a way to deal with the negative impact of user fees on particular client groups, often are difficult to implement; and 3) poorer households often must resort to reducing consumption of food, self-medicating, and/or endure catastrophic health expenditures.^{7, 8}

A basic humanitarian principle is that services and goods provided by aid agencies should be free of charge to recipients, particularly during acute humanitarian crises. However, while this generally is respected in sudden-onset crises or camps, the practice often has been to introduce or maintain user fees when prescribed by national policy in other humanitarian contexts.

The Emerging International Consensus

Today, **the emerging international consensus is that user fees for essential health care in developing countries discriminate against those poorest and most vulnerable, who cannot afford to pay.**⁹ In the effort to attain universal coverage in countries affected by humanitarian crises that have a national policy of user fees, it will be necessary to identify alternative financing mechanisms to compensate for the loss of revenue that may follow the removal of user fees.¹⁰ The often-stated arguments in favour of maintaining user fees, include increased revenue, increased equity, and increased efficiency. Such arguments have been shown to be flawed. Although the information available on cost recovery in areas affected by humanitarian emergencies is limited, there are arguments that justify concern over cost-recovery practices during these crises, especially during the acute humanitarian crisis phase when mortality often is highest and the provision of health services is limited. Utilization rates indicate that, in already disrupted and inequitable healthcare environments, user fees compound inequities in access to treatment and contribute to the destitution of the most vulnerable.¹¹ There is general agreement that the negative consequences of user fees, in particular regarding access for the most vulnerable, outweigh the arguments of increased revenue.¹² In general, removal of user fees does not lead to 'overuse' of services, as patients still are faced with high travel and other non-healthcare related costs.

Elimination of Fees Must be Accompanied by Upgrading the Health Services and Implementation of Supportive Policies and Communication Strategies

Ensuring the PHC services are free for the affected population at the point of delivery during humanitarian crises, while in most cases result in increased consultation rates, by itself, would not be sufficient to guarantee improved access to PHC services. User fees only are one component of cost barriers to the access to PHC.¹³ There also are non-cost barriers.¹⁴ These can be interdependent, and changes in user fees can have unanticipated negative consequences on other access barriers resulting in decreased access or quality of care. To be effective, removal of user fees must be accompanied by improvements in the quality of health services, increased resources (including drug supplies and adequate salaries for health personnel to offset the loss of revenue), e.g. maintaining incentives to community health committees that supervise the clinics using part of the revenues of the user fees, and an expansion of the health network. Also, the accessibility and quality of services must be monitored after the removal of user fees, in order to determine whether the formal fees are replaced by informal fees and that the quality of services does not decrease.

Therefore, the removal of user fees is less straightforward than sometimes is considered, particularly if it represents a shift in national health policy or if the fees are used to cover medications or health staff salaries. It is crucial that any negative consequences are thoroughly examined before such changes are implemented. Also, an expected increased utilization of services and admissions must be anticipated, to avoid staff becoming overburdened, wards overcrowded, or stock-outs of medicines.

The total or partial abolition of fees at public facilities, as a temporary suspension or as a major shift in national policy, must be carefully planned between the appropriate authorities, humanitarian agencies, and donors, to ensure that alternative sources of revenue and additional resources are made available during the crisis. Doing so will contribute to the recovery of the health sector once the crisis ends. Humanitarian agencies should work with the Ministry of Health to introduce more equitable instruments of financing to avoid reintroduction of user fees to fill the financing gap. There is no single solution to these challenges, but, in general, equitable financing of health services is based on prepayment schemes.^{15, 16, 17}

Conclusion

Reduced access to PHC services and the risk of “catastrophic health expenditure” is particularly high in households and communities that have become more destitute and financially vulnerable as a result of humanitarian crises. In addition, these crises may amplify pre-existing inequalities and further restrict access for vulnerable groups, particularly the poor and single-headed households.

Therefore, **during humanitarian crises**, the humanitarian principle of impartiality and the right to health should guide health actions against any risk of economic discrimination in access to PHC. While acknowledging the importance of the context in which policies are applied, particularly during protracted crises, **PHC services during a humanitarian crisis should be provided free of charge at the point of delivery.**

Before taking any decision to abolish or maintain any form of user fees during humanitarian emergencies, policy-makers and other health actors should carefully examine policies, regulations, practices, and their impact on access to health services as well as their influence on equity, utilization, and quality of care. In protracted crises, abolishing user fees will require sustainable, alternative financing mechanisms.

Recommendations

All humanitarian stakeholders should be involved in a policy discussion when changing user fee practices and in developing more equitable financing mechanisms with the government.

For Governments

- Existing user fee practices should be suspended for the provision of PHC if a humanitarian crisis occurs that potentially could affect access to health care
- Any reform related to abolishing user fees must be introduced and monitored carefully, especially in complex situations. Additional resources must be sought internally and/or externally to compensate for the loss of revenue, and to meet the expected increased demand for healthcare services¹⁸
- An appropriate strategy should be developed to communicate the policy change on user fees to the population, to inform them of their entitlements and avoid that formal payments are replaced by informal payments

For Donors

- Donors should consider providing material and financial support to national and local authorities and service providers in exchange for the suspension of user fee policies and practices¹⁹

- Projects that introduce user fees for PHC in the aftermath of a sudden-onset humanitarian crisis should not be accepted. When funding projects that include user fees, it should be requested that these fees be removed in accordance with the principles outlined in this paper
- Further operational research on the effects of removing user fees, managing potential negative consequences, and how to introduce more equitable financing mechanisms in different humanitarian contexts and phases should be supported

For Humanitarian Organizations

- Humanitarian agencies should initiate the policy discussion in favour of abolition of user fees for the provision of PHC in the acute humanitarian crisis phase, even if the relevant health authorities have an established fee system. However, if fees are (temporarily) cancelled; this only should be done after careful planning and ensuring that additional resources have been identified that would guarantee the continuation of the health services
- Humanitarian agencies with expertise in the provision of PHC during emergencies should increase their capacity in order to be available to provide the necessary technical support during all stages of formulation, implementation, and monitoring of fee removal policies
- Humanitarian agencies should take opportunities to further document evidence on the consequences of a waiver of a user fee system in humanitarian crises. Good practice examples of the process for removing user fees should be collected and disseminated

For the Public in Donor Countries

- Equitable humanitarian response and universal access to PHC is a human right. The public should influence the donor and humanitarian organizations to work towards obtaining universal access to PHC for all, based on policies that will reduce access barriers for the poor and disadvantaged

Sources

¹ Article 12 of the ICESCR, comment 14, under 'Accessibility': "Health facilities, goods and services must be affordable for all. Payment for health-care services, as well as services related to the underlying determinants of health, has to be based on the principle of equity, ensuring that these services, whether privately or publicly provided, are affordable for all."

² Affected populations include both those who are directly affected and those who are indirectly affected such as populations who host refugees and internally displaced persons.

³ These would include patients requiring admission for severe illness, as well as life-saving surgery and emergency obstetrical and neonatal care.

⁴ The Sphere Project. Sphere Handbook, Minimal Standards for Disaster Response. 2004.. <http://www.sphereproject.org/>.

⁵ Together, these also are called "out-of-pocket" payments referring hereby to any kind of charge at the point of service delivery.

⁶ Adapted from James C, Hanson, McPake B, et al. To retain or remove user fees? Reflections on the current debate in low- and middle-income countries: Review article, *Applied Health Economics & Health Policy* 2006; 5(3): 137-153.

⁷ Xu K, Evans DB, et al. Household catastrophic health expenditure: a multi-country analysis. *Lancet* 2003;362(9378):111-117.

⁸ Catastrophic health expenditure are health expenditures that drive people deeper into poverty and impact negatively on livelihoods when they are forced to sell assets or are unable to work.

⁹ Xu K, Evans DB, Carrin G, Aguilar-Rivera AM. Designing health financing systems to reduce catastrophic health expenditure. Technical Brief for Policy-makers. Geneva: WHGO, 2005 Number 2.

¹⁰ Carrin G, James C, Evans DB. Achieving universal health coverage: Developing the health financing system. Technical Brief for Policy-makers, Geneva: WHO, 2005 Number 1.

¹¹ Poletti T, Sondorp E, Bornemisza O, Davis A. Cost-sharing in complex emergencies: An example of inappropriate policy transfer. *Humanitarian Exchange*. 2006; No 26.

¹² Generally, an average of 5% of total recurrent health systems expenditure was financed through user fees, well below the 15-20% that the World Bank had hoped for. (See Poletti T. Health care financing in complex emergencies. A background issues paper on Cost-sharing. LSHTM, 4 November 2003.

¹³ These include travel costs, non-healthcare costs, and indirect costs in terms of earnings foregone. Direct costs include informal fees, costs for drugs, laboratory or radiology tests, and charges generated in private facilities.

¹⁴ These are divided into quality, information and cultural barriers.

¹⁵ Equitable financing mechanisms are based on prepayment schemes that can be of different nature, including tax-based, social health insurance, community-based health insurance, or other variants. There is a general political consensus that the contributions of the poorest would need to be heavily subsidized or even waived.

¹⁶ Carrin G, Mathauer I, Xua, K, Evans D. Universal coverage of health services: Tailoring its implementation. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 2008;86:857-863.

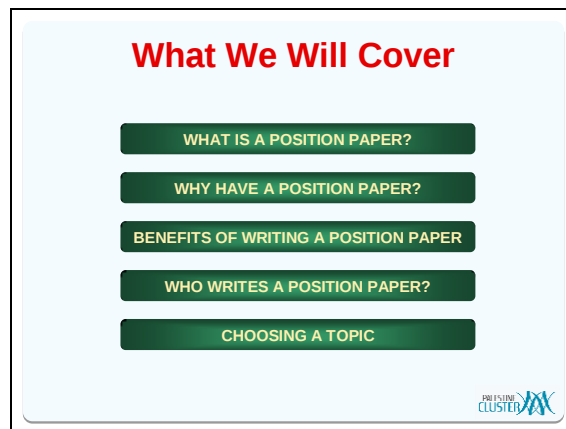
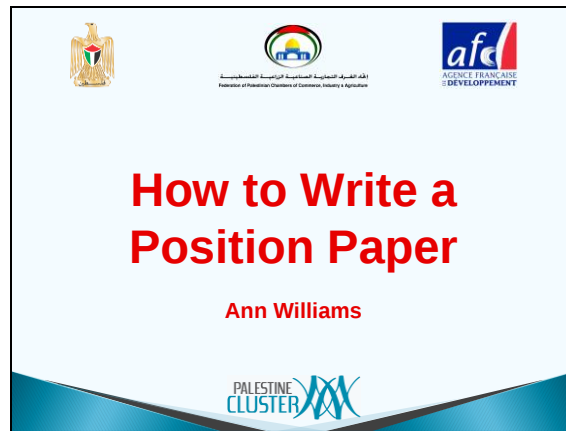
¹⁷ Save the Children. Freeing up health care. a guide to removing user fees. UK: Save the Children, 2008.

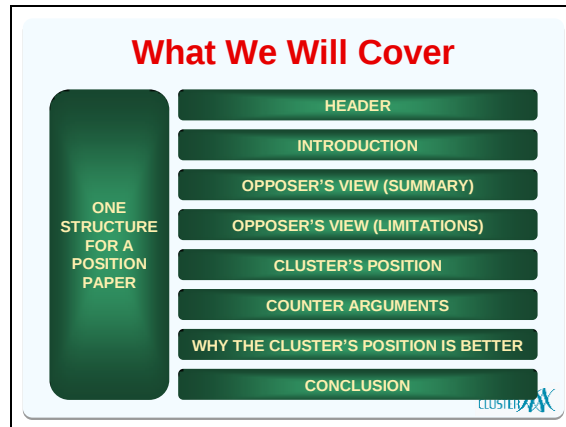
¹⁸ For example, by meeting the Abuja Declaration target of 15% of the governmental expenditures to be allocated to health, Abuja, African Union, 2001.

¹⁹ For example, by meeting the Monterrey target of 0.7% of the GNI for Overseas Development Assistance.

Source: Global Health Cluster, 2010. "Removing user fees for primary health care services during humanitarian crises". World Health Organization. Available at: http://www.who.int/hac/global_health_cluster/about/policy_strategy/EN_final_position_paper_on_user_fees.pdf?ua=1 [Accessed 25.11.2014]

HANDOUT 2.4 - HOW TO WRITE A POSITION PAPER (SLIDES)





Who has heard about “Position Paper”?

Who knows what about “Position Papers”?

PRO'STIVE
CLUSTER W

What is a Position Paper?

What Is a Position Paper?

POSITION PAPER

A concise brief or statement on a specific topic and the position (i.e. view) that a person or entity takes on that topic for later discussion in an appropriate open forum (e.g. a committee, conference)

PRO'STIVE
CLUSTER W

It is sometimes
called a
Positioning Paper,
Argument Essay or
Amicus Brief

In the Context of the PSDCP

- Position Papers are likely to:

- Establish the view of a cluster
- On how it would like a specific topic or issue to be addressed by government
- In order to help the cluster improve its competitiveness or market access

- They will be presented to government as part of a PPD process which is in line with the “Recommended PPD Mechanism for Clusters in Palestine”

Why Have a Position Paper?

Why Have a Position Paper?

TO HELP CONVINC
AN AUDIENCE
THAT A PARTICULAR VIEW IS
VALID
AND
WORTH LISTENING
TO

How Does It Do This?

- It fairly **explains two sides of an issue** - your view and that of the person you are trying to change
- It **highlights the differences** between them using solid reasoning and factual evidence to validate claims
- It **argues for your view** over the other
- It **persuades that your view is better**
- To do this effectively, it addresses potential counter arguments to show that you are **well informed about both sides**



Commentaries v. Position Papers

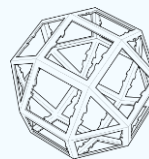
- A Commentary usually only expresses the author's personal opinion about an issue
- A Position Paper explains both sides and discusses why one is stronger or better than the other



Benefits of Writing a Position Paper

Benefits of a Position Paper

- Writing a Position Paper helps a cluster to organize its thoughts and focus its efforts on undertaking appropriate research
- It also provides a framework for effectively presenting the cluster's view to a target audience



What Happens to It?

- All target audience attendees get a copy
- If it is being presented at a forum, it is submitted to the Secretariat before the deadline so that the Secretariat can distribute it, and invitees can brief themselves before it is presented and a dialogue begins



PRO FUTURE
CLUSTER

Who Writes the Position Paper?

Who Writes the Position Paper?

- PPD in the PSDCP is bottom-up driven from cluster MSME level to government to allow....
- The *clusters to choose the issues* they want to be addressed, *produce their own Position Papers* and *recommend the changes they want*
- The *clusters will present their Position Papers at a Permanent PPD Forum*
- This is a *new PPD process* especially designed for clusters
- It has been *approved by the MoNE and FPCCIA*

PRO FUTURE
CLUSTER

Who Writes the Position Paper?

- The cluster will create a Focus Group to write the Position Paper
- Focus Groups may have Working Groups and Technical Committees to support if required
- All activity will have the *support and guidance of the National Expert for PPD and Cluster Animator* during the lifetime of the PSDCP, and also National Experts where appropriate
- Thereafter, support and guidance is intended to come from the Chambers

PRO FUTURE
CLUSTER

Choosing a Topic

Choosing a Topic

- Firstly, identify potential topic ideas:
 - For example, by brainstorming for cluster problems with cluster members at a workshop
- Prioritize ideas generated to create a short-list:
 - For example, by using a simple voting system such as a show of hands



PROFESSOR
CLUSTER

Choosing a Topic

- Identify some potential solutions (i.e. views) for the short-listed topics:
 - Brainstorming again?
- Examine these and select one topic (and one potential view) to take forward

THE TOPIC
SELECTED MUST
BE STRONG



PROFESSOR
CLUSTER

Assessing Strength

- To ensure the topic / view is strong and you will be able to present a strong argument, ask:
 - Is the topic real, with genuine controversy and uncertainty?
 - Is it interesting?
 - Is its scope and the likely ensuing discussion narrow enough to be manageable?
 - Will there be enough material to support your view?



PROFESSOR
CLUSTER

Assessing Strength

- Will you be able to manage the amount of work and material needed to justify it?
- Are there two or more distinct, opposing views that could be taken?
- Will it enable you to assert something specific, make a recommendation and propose a plan of action?
- Is the cluster agreed on the topic?
- Is the cluster interested in advocating on this view?



PRELIMINARY
CLUSTER

Know the Audience

Know the Audience

- Before starting, consider the target audience:
 - Who is it (e.g. a body such as a CCIA, a group of bodies such as a Ministerial Committee, both)?
 - What does it represent?
 - What is / are their mandates / agendas?
 - Who are the individuals?
 - What else do they do and what are their beliefs?
 - Where are they likely to stand on the topic?
 - Do they have interests that might influence their views (e.g. political leanings, own businesses)?

PRELIMINARY
CLUSTER

Know the Audience

- The two most important questions are:

**WHAT EVIDENCE IS LIKELY
TO BE EFFECTIVE WITH
THEM?**

**HOW BEST CAN THIS BE
PRESENTED?**

PRELIMINARY
CLUSTER

Know the Audience

- Consider your audience and your own view and choose the position you will actually take
- “Considering your audience” does not mean “playing up to it”
 - to convince someone that your view is good, you need to consider his / her **way of thinking**
- Think about the terms you will use, if you will need to explain them, the background information you might supply and the details needed to convince



PRE-15-16
CLUSTER

Researching the Topic

Researching the Topic

- Research the topic, develop your view and aim to ensure arguments are:
 - Logically derived
 - Well supported with factual information
 - Agreed by consensus of the cluster
- Beware of those writing Position Papers who have strong preconceived views and opinions



Views that are not well developed and supported can cause dialogue to deteriorate

PRE-15-16
CLUSTER

Evidence Forms

- Facts - information that is verifiable
- Statistical inferences - interpretation and examples of facts
- Informed opinions - developed through research and / or experts on the topic or view
- Personal testimony (e.g. a respected knowledgeable person)



PRE-15-16
CLUSTER

Evidence Sources

- Online:

- Factual sources
- Statistics and databases
- Avoid biased sources (e.g. blogs)



- Media:

- Television documentaries
- Radio broadcasts



These often address
two sides in a
journalistic way

PROFESSOR
CLUSTER

Evidence Sources

- Print:

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Books
- In-depth studies
- Government reports
- Directories
- Handbooks
- Encyclopaedias
- Statistical reports
- Association reports
- Academic articles and journals



PROFESSOR
CLUSTER

Evidence Sources

- Empirical:

- Do field observations
- Conduct surveys
- Interview experts

Interviewing those
with opposing views
can be very
informative!



PROFESSOR
CLUSTER

Researching the Topic

Tip



Use credible, unbiased information.
Sources that make a
strong argument
for a view are fine, but
make sure they are backed up with
FACTS, DATA AND SOLID EVIDENCE

PROFESSOR
CLUSTER

Choosing a View

Choosing a View

- Identify the major points on which the cluster and its opposer disagree:
 - Draw up two columns:
 - » In one, write “Cluster Position” and list the arguments to support the cluster’s case
 - » In the other, write “Opposing Position” and list the arguments which can be used to support that case *from the opposer’s perspective*. What is its strongest arguments? What could it say to defend its position?
 - Brainstorming again?



Handout 2.1 “For and Against List (Example)”



For and Against List (Example)

CLUSTER POSITION	OPPOSING POSITION
People should not be able to carry guns Shootings in public places are rare. The public will feel less safe if they know some people are carrying guns. Accidents happen. Police do not want guns. Some people will carry guns without a permit. Parents will fear letting their children out. In a shooting, police cannot tell criminals from people with guns who are defending themselves. Bullets may mistakenly hit innocent people. Young people are less mature and may use guns to threaten others or play games. Guns left somewhere (e.g. in cars) will not be any use in a shooting. Guns could be stolen and misused. Less stable persons are those most interested in carrying guns. More mentally ill people are in the community these days. Security can be strengthened if areas are perceived to become unsafe. It only takes minutes for police to arrive at an incident.	People should be able to carry guns Shootings in public places are increasing. People will feel more confident and less scared. Parents will not fear letting their children out. Gun accidents are very rare. People will carry guns anyway. The ability to defend yourself is a human right. People who could end shootings will have a gun. A shooting could be ended quickly. Violent people would think twice about shooting. Public places would not be such easy targets for shooters. People with guns are licensed. The only way to stop someone with a gun is to use a gun. People will be able to be go out and feel safer at night.

Source: Adapted from R. Johnson-Sheehan and C. Paine, 2008, "Writing Today", Longman



Points of Contention

POINT OF CONTENTION

A point on which you and the opposing position disagree

- On your “For and Against List”, the major views on which the cluster and opposer are likely to disagree are the “Points of Contention”



Identifying Points of Contention

CLUSTER POSITION	OPPOSING POSITION
People should not be able to carry guns Shootings in public places are rare. The public will feel less safe if they know some people are carrying guns. Accidents happen. Police do not want guns. Some people will carry guns without a permit. Parents will fear letting their children out. In a shooting, police cannot tell criminals from people with guns who are defending themselves. Bullets may mistakenly hit innocent people. Young people are less mature and may use guns to threaten others or play games. Guns left somewhere (e.g. in cars) will not be any use in a shooting. Guns could be stolen and misused. Less stable persons are those most interested in carrying guns. More mentally ill people are in the community these days. Security can be strengthened if areas are perceived to become unsafe. It only takes minutes for police to arrive at an incident.	People should be able to carry guns Shootings in public places are increasing. People will feel more confident and less scared. Parents will not fear letting their children out. Gun accidents are very rare. People will carry guns anyway. The ability to defend yourself is a human right. People who could end shootings will have a gun. A shooting could be ended quickly. Violent people would think twice about shooting. Public places would not be such easy targets for shooters. People with guns are licensed. The only way to stop someone with a gun is to use a gun. People will be able to go out and feel safer at night.

Source: Adapted from R. Johnson-Sheehan and C. Paine, 2005, "Writing Today", Longman



Choosing a View

- Is the cluster's view specific enough?
- How will it benefit the cluster (e.g. improve competitiveness, increase market access)?
- Who will be the audience to which the Position Paper will be presented?
- How well will the cluster's view be able to be supported, and defended when challenged?
- Will be enough solid evidence to counter opposing views and persuade the audience that the cluster's view is better?



Choosing a View

- Can there be a recommended action and action plan?
- Is there enough evidence to support the view?
- Can the amount of evidence likely to be needed be managed?
- Finally, make an informed decision and choose the view the cluster will actually take



More Benefits of Position Papers

- Position Paper writers improve understanding of counter arguments which may be put forward
- Position Papers can be strengthened to better support the cluster's view
- Spokespersons can be better prepared for and able to counter these arguments when presenting Position Papers



PREPARED
CLUSTER

Choosing a Spokesperson

What Does a Spokesperson Do?

- A spokesperson:
 - Presents the Position Paper
 - Put forwards the cluster's view
 - Takes this view him/herself
 - Supports the cluster's view with evidence
 - Persuades the audience of its validity based on well-founded knowledge of the topic
 - Validates claims made in the Position Paper
 - Counters the arguments raised
 - Reinforces the cluster's view
 - Shows that s/he is well informed about all sides

CLUSTER

What Use is the Position Paper?

- The Position Paper is invaluable to the spokesperson for:
 - Preparing the speech
 - Presenting the topic and cluster's view confidently
 - Ensuring that the cluster's view is made clear
 - Getting buy-in from the audience as s/he shares information and the cluster's view with it
 - Facilitating an effective discussion
 - *Negotiating a compromise*

PREPARED
CLUSTER

Ask If the Spokesperson

- Is *interested* in speaking on behalf of the cluster and advocating the cluster's view
- Has the *authority* to speak on the cluster's behalf
- Is *confident* enough
- Can *speak and present* well
- Is able to *manage a discussion* where opposing views are presented
- Is well *informed*
- Is *respected*
- Is *assertive but not aggressive*
- Possesses good *negotiation skills*
- Will have his / her results *accepted by the cluster*



PROFESSOR
CLUSTER

Position Paper Structures

Structure of a Position Paper

- There are many different structures to choose from when developing Position Papers
- Choose one to fit the context, topic, the cluster's view, its purpose and the audience



PROFESSOR
CLUSTER

Structure of a Position Paper

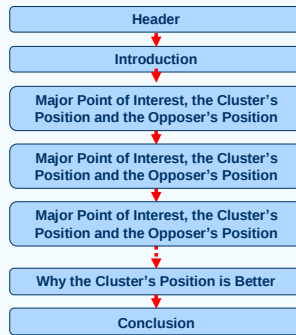


TYPE 1

The opposing view and its limitations are described, then your view and its strengths explained and the counter arguments addressed

PROFESSOR
CLUSTER

Structure of a Position Paper



TYPE 2

A point-by-point comparison explaining why your view is better than the opposing view, then your view is explained and its strengths



Structure of a Position Paper

- To win over the audience, argue *fairly, objectively and reasonably*
- The strongest Position Papers present both views as fairly, objectively and reasonably as possible, and then *persuade the audience that one view is better than the other*
- If the audience thinks the Position Paper is distorting the opposing view, it might doubt the trustworthiness of the cluster's view



Structure of a Position Paper

- Let facts, evidence and reasoning do the talking
- If the cluster's view is truly stronger, you should be able to explain both views fairly and demonstrate why the cluster's view is better
- With some topics, there may be more than two possible views. Type 1 can be expanded to include summaries and limitations of the others if needed



Structure of a Position Paper

- However, try to reduce the issue down to two major views to make it easy for your readers to keep track of the arguments you present
- As you draft the Position Paper, you may decide a different structure is better for your circumstances
- There is no "Right Way"
- Whichever structure is chosen, *the key is to talk about both views as fairly as possible*



One Structure for a Position Paper

Header

Header

- Name of the spokesperson
- Cluster represented
- Cluster location (city, governorate + country)
- Body the issue is to be raised with
- Topic that will be presented for discussion

Spokesperson:	Mohammed Jaradat
Cluster:	Dairy Products Cluster of Jenin
Location:	Jenin, Palestine
Body:	Permanent PPD Forum for Clusters in Palestine
Topic:	"Cost of milk production in Palestine is too high and this is encouraging imports of and reducing demand for locally produced milk"



Introduction

Introduction

- Use this to set the framework for the Position Paper
- Identify and introduce the topic
- Provide a background to the topic to help readers understand what is being written about (e.g. historical background, cause(s) of the issue, those effected by it and the effect(s) on them). Tries to grab the reader's attention
- State the cluster's purpose clearly - tells the readers that the Position Paper will explain two views of the topic and demonstrate why the cluster's view is better
- Lead into a statement on the cluster's view



Stating the Cluster's View

- Stating the cluster's view in the introduction has some advantages:
 - The audience immediately and clearly knows where the cluster stands
 - The cluster's view is in one of the sections that people read first (i.e. first and last)
 - It is a common format for academic argument, and familiar to many
- Or you can leave it until the conclusion - good if the audience is expected to be difficult to persuade



Opposer's Position (Summary)

Opposer's Position (Summary)

- Focus on external involvement in the topic
- Mention relevant actions undertaken by external bodies regarding the topic in the past (e.g. resolutions, declarations, programmes, conferences, etc)
- Focus on the bodies in the audience
- Discuss any existing policies relating to the topic



Opposer's Position (Summary)

- Explain the opposer's view of the topic in a straightforward way:
 - There is no need to argue for the opposing side, but explain its view in a way that the audience will consider fair, objective and reasonable
- Use quotes from the opposer's arguments to explain its view:
 - Paraphrasing or summarizing the opposer's argument is acceptable, as long as it is done fairly



Opposer's Position (Limitations)

Opposer's Position (Limitations)

- Explain the limitations of the opposer's view:
 - What is missing?
 - What has not been considered?
 - What has been ignored in the argument?
- Highlight limitations as objectively as possible
- Do not be sarcastic or dismissive
- Fairly point out the weaknesses of the opposing view



Cluster's Position

Cluster's Position

- Inform on what the cluster has done concerning the topic. For example:
 - Undertaken a market research study
 - Attended a conference
 - Sponsored a resolution
 - Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a supporting body (e.g. research centre, university, PalTrade, specialised union)
 - Adopted internal cluster policies / strategies
 - Etc



PRO FUTURE
CLUSTER

Cluster's Position

- Take the audience by the hand through a few Points of Contention. For each:
 - Explain **and show** why the cluster's view is better
 - Use sources to back up argument
 - Use good reasoning, examples, facts and data to prove the cluster's view is more credible



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Counter Arguments

Counter Arguments

- Know the opposer's view as well as the cluster's
- The Position Paper must present the opposer's view and erode it with counter evidence
- Know all possible counter arguments that may be raised:
 - Refer to your "For and Against List"
 - Ask what someone who disagrees with the cluster's view might say about each point made in the Position Paper, *or about the cluster's position as a whole*

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Counter Arguments

- Summarize the counter arguments. Present each one fairly and objectively
- Address each one in turn, provide supporting evidence and then:
 - Show why they are not sound and reject them **OR**
 - Concede your opposer has a point, but explain why the cluster's view is stronger
- Restate evidence to support the cluster's view
- Show that the cluster has seriously considered many views on the topic



Counter Arguments

- It is better to consider one or two significant counter arguments in detail rather than provide a long superficial list and replies
- Ensure that the cluster's replies reflect and are consistent with the cluster's view
- If a counter argument changes the cluster's view, revise the original argument accordingly



Why the Cluster's Position is Better

Why Cluster's Position is Better

- Compare and contrast the opposer's view with the cluster's by picking 3+ points for argument
- Consider each and show why the cluster's view is better:
 - Provide a general statement of the cluster position
 - Elaborate using references, documents, source data, past experiences and authoritative testimony
 - Provide support / proof (preferably 5+ sources)
 - Give the cluster's educated and informed opinion
 - Conclude by restating the cluster's position



The Goal

- To show that the cluster's view is stronger **on balance**, so you can concede some points to the opposer if needed
- You are trying show that **the cluster's view has more strengths and fewer weaknesses** than the opposer's view



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When Writing

- Establish flow from paragraph to paragraph
- Think how you will keep your voice active
- Quote sources to establish authority
- Stay focused on the cluster's view throughout
- Focus on logical arguments
- Do not lapse into summary - do this in the conclusion!

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Conclusion

Conclusion

- **Is the most crucial part of the Position Paper**
- Restates the cluster's view - drives it home
- Elaborates the cluster's view based on past and present actions of bodies concerned with the topic
- Puts forward a constructive proposal(s) for dealing with the topic
- Shows how the cluster's view provides a brighter future than the opposer's view
- Provides a plan of action

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Tips

- Summarize, then conclude your argument
- Do not introduce any new information
- The simplest and most basic conclusion restates the cluster's view in different words and discusses its implications
- Refer to the first paragraph and opening statements as well as the main points
- Restate the main ideas clearly
- Reflect the succession and importance of the arguments logically and conclude their development



Last Words

Last Words

- A Position Paper should contain at least 5 primary sources of information to support the proposed view. These should be referenced in the text and appear in a reference list at the end of the paper. Use an internationally acknowledged referencing system (e.g. Harvard)
- It should be no more than 5 single sided pages (excluding cover sheet and reference page)
- Use Ariel (10 point), one and a half line spacing and leave a line between paragraphs



Handout 2.2

“Position Paper (Carrying Guns for Self Defence)”

Handout 2.3

“Position Paper (Free Primary Healthcare in Humanitarian Crises)”



Any Questions?



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Handout 2.4 “How to Write a Position Paper (Slides)”

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Thank You for your Attention

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