The Art of Building Facilitation Capacities

A Training Manual by Lydia Braakman & Karen Edwards

RECOFTC

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Recoftc Training Materials

RECOFTC has developed a range of training materials to catalogue the documents of RECOFTC and its partners. The Training Materials Series includes manuals, guidelines, case studies and other materials for training purposes in the context of community forestry development.

As community forestry development is based on participatory processes, methods and tools, so are these training materials. The materials build on participatory learning techniques and adult learning principles to encourage contributions from all learners and for participants to build on their experiences. A participatory approach encourages mutual respect, confidence building, cooperation, and shared decision-making during the training just as participants should do in the field. The product that is now in your hands was developed and tested in collaboration with partners in Asia over a period of time. It might appear as though it has reached its final stage. However, it has not. Feel free to adapt, translate, photocopy and distribute what you need from this manual, as long as the original text is properly acknowledged and the objective is not for profit or gain. Please give us your feedback in order to improve later editions, and send copies of any materials which draw from this manual to RECOFTC.

About Recoftc

The Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific (RECOFTC) is an international organization which works in close collaboration with partner organizations to actively support community forestry development in the region.

As a learning organization, RECOFTC designs and facilitates learning processes and systems that support the capacity development of community forestry institutions and organizations. RECOFTC seeks to constructively promote dialogue between multi-stakeholders to ensure equitable management of forest resources.

Located in Bangkok, Thailand, RECOFTC was established in 1987 in response to the growing awareness that community participation in resource management could assist in protecting forest areas as well as further rural development.

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Acknowledgements

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- *Ronnakorn Triraganon, who was, on many occasions, our co-trainer, and through the synergy of this team work many creative ideas developed on which this manual is based,*
- *Marco Miagostovich who challenged us to make many of the sessions in this manual more accessible for less experienced trainers and,*
- *so many other colleagues who contributed to this manual and encouraged us to keep going.*

We would specifically like to acknowledge the contribution of concepts from the 'Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making' by Sam Kaner and colleagues. This publication inspired us to adapt the framework of participatory decision-making to community forestry and formed the basis of many ideas behind our session plans.

The participants of all the various training activities also provided many contributions when we were testing and developing exercises for this manual by providing useful feedback without ever losing their sense of humor. We would also like to thank the participants and institutions that helped us during workshops hosted in their countries.

There are many sessions, exercises and games listed in this manual which draw upon material from sources both known and unknown to us. Many of the original references have been adapted and we hope will be further adapted for different purposes in the future. If a reader feels that an exercise is incorrectly attributed, then we would be pleased to hear from them, and we will make the appropriate changes to later editions of this manual.

1. Preparing for the job
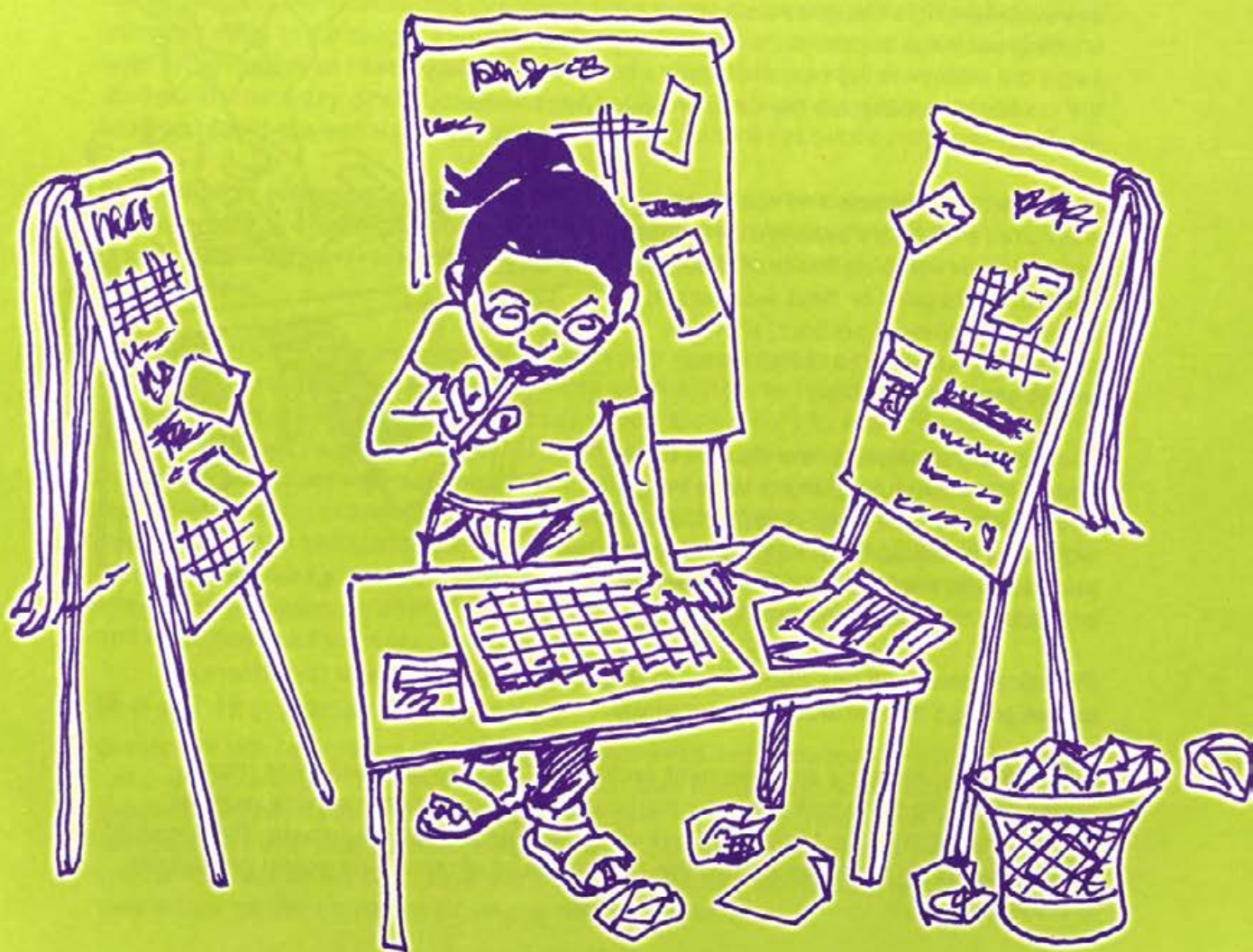
◎ How to use this manual
◎ How to maximize the
   impact of your training

How to use this manual

@ What is this manual about?

This manual is designed for trainers and facilitators who have an interest in improving the facilitation skills of field workers in the context of community forestry development. It is designed as part of a facilitation training package supported by a training video that helps the trainer bring real life scenes from the field into the classroom alongside the sessions suggested in the manual.

However, experience and feedback has illustrated that many sessions are equally useful for developing the facilitation skills of managers or field workers in other development sectors, if they are slightly adapted to the different target group or context.

The training sessions in the manual have been effectively used with a wide range of audiences from all over Asia, including field workers, extension workers, college teachers and managers working for the governments, NGOs or projects.
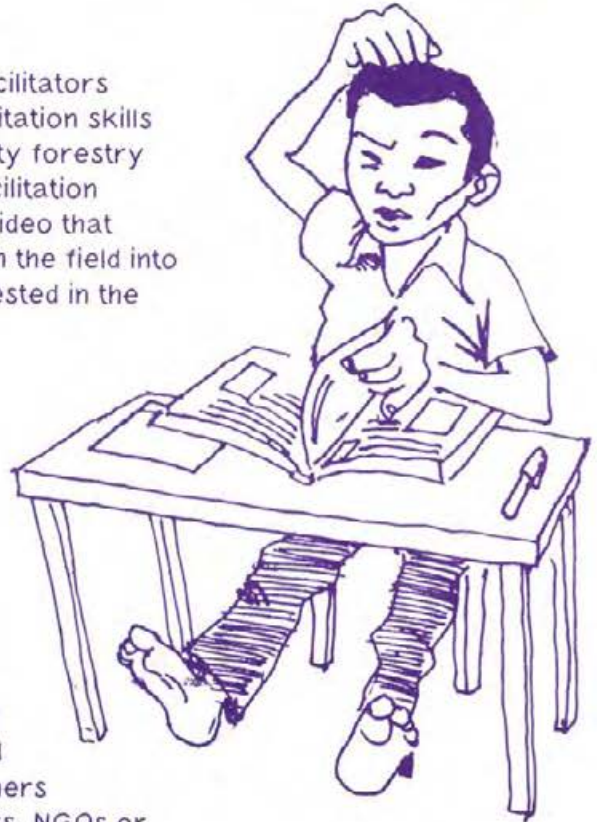
Practical ideas and tips about how to use and adapt the manual for different target groups are included in the manual.

In community forestry development facilitation may involve anything from supporting long-term and complex participatory processes involving multiple stakeholder groups to facilitating one-off meetings with small groups. The focus of this manual is on the inner-circle; the facilitation of groups, and group processes in meetings.

Facilitating groups in meetings

Facilitating an enabling environment for participatory decision-making

Facilitating longer term processes involving multi-stake holder groups
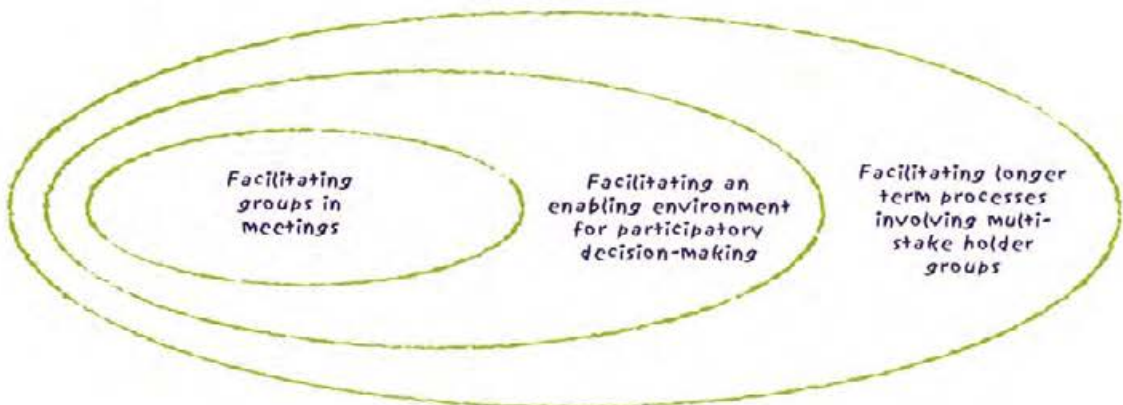
@ Why was the Manual developed?

As community forestry has become more sophisticated in the last ten years the role and context of existing extension approaches has been questioned. If community forestry is about local people managing and using forest resources based on their own needs and decisions, then many questions are raised. Do villagers need to be taught about forest management or is there a need to learn with villagers about resource management to meet their needs? How can community forestry practitioners better facilitate decision-making processes amongst and between users for planning and effective resource management?

Facilitation is emerging as an important aspect of effective community forestry development in community forestry assessment, negotiation, formulating management agreements and building the capacities of users in forest management.

To be effective, community forestry extension agents need to consciously shift to a facilitation role and develop skills which enable them to facilitate communication, sharing, problem-solving and processes which allow users to make decisions for themselves. This requires a combination of skills and an understanding of group dynamics which allow practitioners to explore user perspectives and, more importantly, open channels of communication both amongst users and with outsiders. These skills, along with a better understanding of such group processes, can help community forestry practitioners identify and introduce appropriate interventions based on users' needs and desires whilst building on the knowledge and experience of the users themselves.

@ How the Manual developed

During the last few years RECOFTC, with partners and collaborators in the region, has been involved in the development of various participatory processes to support community forestry development such as conflict resolution, enterprise development and forest management. It was identified through experience that a critical element of making these various participatory processes successful in the field would be the existence of strong field facilitators.

Initially, a facilitation module started to emerge from time spent building the capacities of trainers in participatory training techniques over the years in various countries in Asia. This module was then adapted for different capacity building processes of facilitators in various participatory processes.

A critical point in the evolution of this manual was the redesign of the RECOFTC international course in Community Forestry Extension to Facilitation Skills for community forestry as this provided an opportunity to synthesize and further develop materials from previous initiatives.

The training and learning materials for these various training initiatives evolved gradually. No existing books or background materials on facilitation were

available in forestry or even in a wider development context. Materials from beyond the sector were therefore adapted to the specific target groups and purposes.

Through various rounds of testing the sessions, new ideas and methods were developed to make the training more effective in order to address difficulties encountered by the participants. For example, the concept of being content neutral as a facilitator always meets resistance in any group. Various sessions were developed to address this issue in different ways for participants to gradually grasp the importance of it.

Through testing and learning by doing, it was identified that one of the main challenges in training field based facilitators was to bring field reality and role models to the classroom. This challenge stimulated the development of the training video which is available to be used in conjunction with the manual. The video was developed around the structure of the manual by filming real field facilitators in real meetings and capturing their opportunities and challenges which can be shared with others and used for reflection in other training rooms around the region.

How to use the manual

This manual can be used in many different ways, depending on the type of training program you are running, the objectives, the target group, the money and time available, etc. It can be used intensively over two consecutive weeks, working through all the steps of the fundamentals of facilitation and practicing skills in a classroom setting. It can also be used in bits and pieces to reinforce certain skills, and include field exercises or time for participants to go home and practice on the job. The manual includes ideas for these different options for different purposes and target groups.

It is not necessary to read the manual from beginning to end before you begin. It is designed for dipping into, for providing ideas, to give you a taste for what is possible. It contains suggestions for sessions covering a wide range of topics, written up in session plans to guide you through certain flow activities which includes exercises and hand-outs.

Although the sessions are written up in quite a detailed manner, it is not meant to be a blue print. The guidelines presented in this manual provide an example and with flexibility and your own creativity it can help you design exciting and effective training courses for facilitators.

How the manual is organized

The manual is organized into nine main sections. Apart from the introductory two sections and the last two sections, each section provides a number of training sessions related to the same topic. Although the sections follow a certain logical

flow, this does not mean that you have to follow this flow from beginning to end. The sessions within the sections also follow a logical flow. However, most of the sessions within the sections can also be used independently, based on the objectives and target group of your training course. Many session plans also contain 'attachments' in the form of exercises, case studies, games, transparencies and hand-outs. These are examples that should be adapted or replaced to make them more appropriate for your own training situation. A brief description of the contents and rationale of the different sections is provided below.

1. Preparing for the job
This section provides you with ideas, tips and hints to maximize the impact of your training by adapting it to your specific training context.

2. Setting the context of the training
Contains sessions that are essential for enabling free and open participation right from the start of your training program. The sessions will help you as the trainer to prepare the groundwork and break the ice.

3. Participatory decision-making
Provides a series of sequential sessions introducing step by step the three phases of the participatory decision-making process. This participatory decision-making model serves as the backbone of many sessions of this manual.

4. Facilitation fundamentals
This section contains a variety of sessions that are essential for training 'less advanced' facilitators. It provides the opportunity to explore the concepts of facilitation, facilitator and participatory groups.

5. Core roles of a facilitator
This section contains sessions which focus on the two main roles of a facilitator; being content neutral and a process guide. After introducing these concepts in section four, this section takes it a practical step further.

6. Practicing facilitation skills
Includes a wide range of sessions in which the overall capacity of facilitator is broken down into specific skills. Each session highlights one or two skills at a time to enable participants to practice these skills in a focussed manner.

7. Integrating skills
The purpose of the sessions in this section is to integrate the skills practiced in the earlier session in an integrated way through role-plays and simulations.

8. Optional sessions

Contains a variety of sessions that are not considered 'core material'. Again, depending on your training context, you can select the appropriate warming-up sessions and other extra curricula sessions to use. Most of these sessions are fun and can therefore lighten up the more intensive sessions of the other sections.

9. Annex

Contains a variety of background materials that can help you prepare for your training.

How to complement the manual with the training video

If struggling with classroom-based training for field facilitators, combining the use of the manual and the training video could make things easier and bring some reality to your classroom. The video consists of a range of clips which have specific learning objectives and therefore reflection questions, which guides both the participants and trainers in the learning process. The clips are linked with specific sessions in the manual and these linkages are explained separately in the brochure that accompanies the video.

What to watch for when adapting and translating the manual

The following hints and warnings are based on the experience of facilitating others when translating and adapting the manual.

Specific culture-related concepts

You will face a real challenge during the adaptation of culture-related concepts. On the one hand, while you would like to bring about change as a result of your training, so too will you have to challenge the black and white thinking and ingrained behavior of your participants. On the other hand, you don't want to create too much resistance, which will make them turn away from you. This is a real balancing act.

Most of the resistance we met challenging participants in the region related to the concept of being content neutral as a facilitator. Many 'ancient' philosophies (such as Buddhism and Confucianism) that were developed in Asia but which have diminished in importance, follow the principles of facilitation that are being advocated in this manual.

Specific country/context-related parts

Certain parts of the materials or methods must be adapted to your context to increase the likelihood that your participants can relate to it.

Examples of country/context related-parts that may need adaptation are: case studies, group norms, and energizers involving body contact (depending on culture and gender), etc.

Specific facilitation-related terminology

The same holds true for terminology relating to facilitation. Even the word "facilitation" does not translate well into other languages. Therefore, do not use the conventional terms even if these are better known, as they carry the wrong connotations. Use new terms instead and explain their meaning.

Specific training terminology

The training terminology in this manual has been carefully selected. It is consistent with the philosophy of participatory training and experiential learning to avoid some of the preconceptions towards conventional training. Therefore, do not use the conventional terms even if these are better known, as they carry the wrong connotations. Use new terms instead and explain their meaning (see also glossary in the annex, page 267). For example:

- ◎ training/ trainer and not teaching/ teacher,
- ◎ session/ session plan and not lesson / lesson plan,
- ◎ participants and not trainees or students.

Specific English terminology

Certain terminology or words used in this manual may not exist in your own national language. There are several options for dealing with these foreign terms:

1. Look for the word in your language that is closest to the original meaning.
2. Make up a new word in your own language and explain the meaning.
3. Use the original English term but describe the meaning in your own language.

You will probably have to judge which option is best on a case by case basis Examples: paraphrasing, probing, feedback, Force Field Analysis, action plan, hand-out, role-play, and simulation.

Who would be best to adapt and translate the manual?

Preferably you should look for an experienced facilitator with excellent translation skills and thorough understanding of English with good understanding of community forestry. However, you might not find all these qualities in one person. You could try to identify a number of people who have these qualities and have them translate and review the manual on a team basis.

How to maximize the impact

◙ Sharing our lessons learned

Below are some of our most important lessons learned while building facilitation capacities.

- ◎ As the term facilitation has been adopted very loosely in the region, it is very important to come to a common and shared understanding of the concept.
- ◎ Building facilitation capacities of somebody involves the whole person, including his or her beliefs, values, norms, attitude and behavior, and can sometimes be very threatening for those who are not ready to take personal responsibility in learning or change.
- ◎ The more concrete the context is in which facilitation is set, the easier the learners can relate to it.
- ◎ Without existing examples and role models of effective facilitation, it is hard for the learners to grasp what it actually means.

Based on these lessons learned we would like to share with you the following hints to maximize the impact of your training.

Spend enough time leveling off on what facilitation means

There are some sessions in the manual that can help you do this in the section on Facilitation Fundamentals. Understanding your target group and their current perceptions of facilitation in advance of the training will help you gauge the leveling off. Never assume that because participants use the word facilitation they understand the meaning. Use the early sessions of the training to build a mutual understanding in the group about the concept as this will make your life as a trainer easier in the long term.

Challenge participants without threatening them

When people are learning to become facilitators personal and behavioral change is inevitable. In our experience some of the concepts of facilitation meet some resistance with certain target groups. As a trainer for effective learning it is important that you respond to the resistance and give participants honest feedback even though you may not be so familiar with the role of challenger as a trainer. Challenging can be done in a non-threatening way so that participants do not feel embarrassed or worried in front of the group. Gradually build up your challenging process through reflection questions helping the participant involved realize for themselves that there could be alternative perspectives to the one they are presenting. Sometimes it can help to invite the group or the participants' peers to challenge the person involved as this can be perceived differently from the trainer directly challenging. In our experience, if challenging is done in a non-threatening way it can be a part of a powerful learning process which can lead to changes in behavior.

Try to identify a concrete context and clear focus for your training program

In this manual we have used participatory decision-making as the context for the training. However, this may not be the most appropriate context in which to set your training. Try to find a context in which your participants can relate also making sure

that they can relate the concepts to their own situation and application. Other contexts may include setting facilitation in the bigger picture of a specific process or task. This is important so that the skills and concepts presented in the training course can be linked to the reality of participants.

Ensure that participants understand that you cannot be a role model for a facilitator while you are training

As a trainer in front of the class using participatory training techniques many participants will perceive you as an example facilitator. In many ways you are, as you will be using a wide range of facilitation skills and methods to facilitate the sharing of experiences among participants. But in many ways you are not, as you are content focused and are leading participants down a learning pathway that you have determined, so you are not content neutral in that respect. It is important that you clarify this early on in the training otherwise participants may start to follow you as a role model. Use opportunities in sessions such as the "Role of the Facilitator" to introduce this aspect.

Provide examples of effective facilitators during your training course

In addition it may be important for you to identify role models of facilitators for participants to relate to. This can be done either in simulations where you or colleagues play a facilitator, field trips where you have identified an experienced facilitator or using videos where role models are illustrated. The training video accompanying this manual seeks to respond to the challenge of comparing different role models of field facilitators. Whichever option you go for you will find that it will really help if participants can visualize what you actually mean by a facilitator especially if their perceptions of facilitation at the beginning of the course are very different.

Facilitating classroom simulations

Many of the sessions in this manual make use of simulations. This is when you create a village situation in the classroom. We would all agree that the best learning practice for field facilitators is in the village, and we would certainly encourage you to go for this option if it is possible (see for more details the various training scenarios that follow).

However, it is not always possible to go with participants and organize meetings in which participants can practice their facilitation skills. In the annex (page 261) you will find guidelines on how to prepare and facilitate simulations in a classroom setting.

Using a video camera to reinforce learning through reflection and feedback

One of the underlying principles of learning for building the capacities of facilitators that we have experienced, is the need to provide participants with opportunities to practice giving and receiving feedback on their skills and behavior in a group. Many sessions in the manual seek to provide this opportunity with a specific focus, and guide the trainer in helping the participant and the group in reflection.

From experience we have found that a powerful learning tool which can support this experience and reflection approach to learning is the use of a video camera. Filming

participants in facilitation practice may seem daunting but can be kept simple and can aid the trainer and the participants in the reflection process.

◎ Put the camera on a tripod in the corner of the classroom behind the participant who is practicing facilitation. Make sure that you have as much as possible of the group in the picture. Do not worry if the facilitator is not fully visible as you want to record the reaction of the group to the facilitator's actions.

◎ Start the camera just before the simulation begins and leave the camera running throughout. You can leave the camera to do the job on its own so that there is less attention on the camera and therefore the group is less conscious of it.

◎ If there is more than one trainer in your team have one trainer record the point on the tape where specific learning points come out. This will make it easier for you when replaying the tape to the participants.

◎ Stop the camera as soon as the simulation finishes and rewind the tape to replay.

When reflecting with the participants on the simulation use the videotape to help recall and reinforce the learning points. In most cases it will be impossible to review the whole tape because of time constraints, but you can select specific moments.

From our experience participants often forget or distort what actually happened during their practice. The video can really help bring them back to the actual reality of the exercise and forces participants into more objectively analyzing their behavior.

@ How to tailor-make your training

As mentioned earlier, the sessions in this manual have been effectively used with a wide range of audiences from all over Asia. Each training program has different objectives and it is critical not to confuse them. The clearer you are about the focus of the training program and its realistic objectives, the clearer the participants will be about what they should learn. Some groups are only interested in improving their practical facilitation skills, while others might need to develop a much wider range of competencies from meeting design to facilitating organizational change.

As soon as the training sessions move beyond practicing facilitation skills into participatory decision-making, the impact of your training event will depend largely on its institutional context. The multi-stakeholder decision-making approach followed in this manual may conflict with the culture and structure of the organizations of your participants. Therefore, institutional constraints must be taken into account while selecting participants, and planning and implementing the training program, as they may well make your training task particularly difficult.

Before any training begins, the most important step for you is to find out a way of understanding the needs of relevant institutions and individuals, and the constraints present in those particular institutional settings. Although it might be tempting to use a blueprint training program, which is certainly less work, it is rarely going to fit the specific needs of a new institution or group of participants. The best way to adapt and finely tune your training is to find out as much as you can about the institutional context beforehand.

@ Examples of different training scenarios

Depending on the focus, objectives and target group, a different curriculum for your training event can be developed. Each requires careful design and a different approach in preparation and follow-up. A great deal will depend upon the time you have available. Sample training scenarios which describe agendas for various options are shown below. These are only meant as examples and not as blueprints, which you should adapt to your own specific circumstances.

In the annex (page 254), you will find the following examples of training types with different focuses and geared to different target groups:

Duration	Training type	Main focus	Target group
6 days	Two workshops of three days, including on the job application	Facilitating participatory decision-making	Homogenous group from same office, or same job, managers who cannot afford much time off
2 weeks	Two weeks in a row workshop, classroom based	Skill development in participatory decision- making	Diverse audience from a variety of organizations or places
4 months	Training program including two workshops and 'homework'	Capacity development in facilitating participatory field process	Field workers, rangers, extensionists

2. Setting the context of the training

- ◎ Getting to know each other
- ◎ Setting the context
- ◎ Exploring expectations
- ◎ Developing norms
- ◎ Benchmarking facilitation

Getting to know each other

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> will know more about the strengths and weaknesses of both themselves and other participants as facilitators

> can explain the importance of knowing themselves and others for improving their performance as facilitators

Materials

Copied hand-out

Time

1 hour 30 minutes

Steps

1. Introduce the session by explaining that before we introduce the program it is important that we introduce ourselves and get to know each other better. Explain that we will use a method that is creative and fun and probably new to most, and which is intended for getting to know not only each other but also ourselves. Stress that both are important for us as facilitators.

2. Present the example of "the best of me as a facilitator" and ask participants to prepare a similar flip-chart about themselves. Ask them to stick the flip-chart on their body with masking tape. Invite participants to stand up and walk around so as to share their flip-charts with the rest of the group.

3. Assemble participants and show an example of "the other side of me as a facilitator". Explain the importance of reflecting upon our weaknesses and the things we would like to improve so that we can benefit more from the training. Repeat the same procedure.

4. Ask participants to stand in a circle with their flip-charts still attached and reflect on the exercise by asking questions such as:

   ◎ How did you feel introducing yourselves in this way? (embarrassed, shy, confused?)

   ◎ What did you learn from this exercise?

   ◎ Why do you think we use this exercise?

5. Introduce the concepts of reflection and sharing as tools for learning about others and ourselves, and our experiences. Explain that we selected this type of exercise for introducing ourselves as this training program will deal with real personal issues, not theory. It will be about ourselves as facilitators.

6. Summarize by stressing that during the rest of the training sessions there will be plenty of opportunities to get to know ourselves and each other better.

Comments

This method of getting to know each other is both reflective and dynamic. Remember, some people have never participated in a training session like this before and may feel confused and embarrassed. Therefore, careful introduction and reflection are an important part of the exercise.

Setting the context

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> can explain the flow and approach of the training sessions

> have agreed on their role and that of the trainer

> feel a sense of ownership for the content of the training program and its approach

Materials

> Training program flow on a series of large flip-charts

> Learning objectives of the training program written on flip-chart(s)

> "Personal learning model" drawn on flip-chart

> Daily Schedule and list of logistical matters

Time

1 hour and 30 minutes

Steps

1. Explain that we are going to set the stage by looking at the purpose, objectives, flow and process of the training program. We will discuss the WHY, WHAT, HOW, WHO and WHEN in a participatory way.

2. Explain first the why by posting the purpose and objectives of the training program somewhere in the room where everyone can see them. Leave them there for the duration of the course. Explain how these were determined and clarify any questions.

3. Explain that we will now move to the what of the workshop. Place the pile of prepared flip-charts showing the flow of the workshop in the middle of the room. Ask for some volunteers to put the flip-charts in the right sequence and placing the flip-charts the right way round so that the remaining participants can see them. Walk through the flow and clarify* participants' understanding by asking questions.

4. Explain that we will now look at how the training will be conducted. Ask them to guess (percentages are averages) how much adults can absorb from what they hear (20%), see and hear (40%), and from experience (80%).

5. Explain that the approach used will be the approach taught. This means there will be very few lectures, and a lot of facilitation practice. Explain briefly the other methods mentioned in the hand-out.

6. Explain that this training event may require them to do things differently from what they are used to. Using the flip-chart with the "Personal learning model" on it (see hand-out), explain the different zones. At some points during the course participants will be asked to move into their stretch zone. Explain that individual comfort zones are unique, so everybody will have to honestly assess for themselves if they are in their stretch zone.

7. Explain that the who is closely related to the how. Ask participants what they think will be your role as a trainer, and their role as participants. Stress that how much they will learn during this course will depend on their own attitude and willingness to try new things. Display the flip-chart with the comfort zone and explain.

8. Introduce briefly the when of the training by posting and reviewing the schedule.

9. Discuss any other logistical matters concerning food, accommodation, money, etc.

Comments

* Participants unfamiliar with facilitation and coming from an extension background may have expectations that the course will focus on the technical issues of community forestry. It is important to respond to this by explaining that the technical focus of this course is the process of facilitation itself. For example, participants will not learn how to develop a model tree nursery but will learn how to prepare a plan with the community for a tree nursery based on the community's needs and ideas.

On becoming a better facilitator

Be prepared

This training program will not be about theoretical facilitation concepts or issues. It will be about ourselves!

To be a good facilitator you don't need to:

◎ have an academic degree or know everything

◎ be very smart

◎ be a good speaker

◎ be a good leader

However, you do need to be:

◎ interested in the people around you

◎ willing to look critically at yourself

◎ willing to listen carefully to what people tell you

◎ willing to change yourself

What type of facilitator we are depends on our:

◎ identity   ◎ thinking

◎ values   ◎ beliefs

◎ culture   ◎ personality

How good we are depends upon our:

◎ qualities   ◎ capacities

◎ strengths   ◎ weaknesses

◎ experiences   ◎ ability to learn from our mistakes!

Other methods used during this training program

Most courses you have attended have probably used mainly lectures, presentations and guest speakers. This training program will use very few of these methods. If they are used they will be short. You cannot become a better facilitator by only listening to lectures. A mixture of methods is the most effective way for improving your facilitation skills. A couple of the methods we use during this training program are mentioned below.

Self-reflection

Self-reflection is an important part of self-development, a process whereby people think for themselves and use their own experiences in order to refine

their own ideas. This can lead to personal change which may include new feelings, new insights, and new abilities, etc. This is why we will ask you to assess your own strengths and weaknesses regularly, throughout this training program.

Receiving feedback

Although we can learn a lot through self-reflection, we can learn even more about ourselves and how we behave from the feedback given to us by other people as to how they perceive us.

Observation

Another effective way to learn is by observing other facilitators. Many good ideas about facilitation, such as what to do or what not to do when handling difficult situations, can be learnt from actively watching others facilitating.

Practicing

The most powerful way to learn, however, comes from practicing facilitation yourself. There will be plenty of opportunity to do so during this training program.

Don't panic!

Although this training course might be different from what you are probably used to, it will be much more fun because you will be actively involved. Sometimes you will be challenged to do things you have not done before and to stretch and extend your mind. But there is no need to panic as it will be done gradually.

The choice is yours!

Comfort zones are very personal and only you will know if you are stretching yourself. If you are afraid of thinking about and doing things differently from what you are used to, you will not learn much. However, if you open yourself up to new ideas and methods you will learn a lot from this course.

personal learning model

Exploring expectations

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> have formulated their expectations about the course

> can explain why they think their expectations will be met or why they won't be

Materials

Flip-charts with the following captions:

> *I am here because I want to improve my facilitation skills when working with villagers*

> *I am here because I want to improve my facilitation skills when working in the office with my colleagues*

> *I am here because my boss told me to be*

> *I am here because I like to meet people from other places, and share ideas with them*

> *I am here because I have never practiced facilitation before and want to learn how to facilitate*

> *I am here because....*

Time

30 minutes

Steps

1. Firstly, post the flip-charts with captions in various corners in the room. Then refer to the training agenda and explain that this agenda has been developed, based on past experiences. Explain that now that participants have gone through the agenda in detail, they might have more specific expectations of things they want to happen or not want to happen.

2. Draw attention to the posters with the captions and ask participants to walk to the one that captures best why they came to the course.

3. After everyone has chosen their spot, invite participants to share their specific expectations with this group and write them on the poster. Give them ten minutes to do this.

4. Ask groups to rotate around the other posters and read the expectations from the other groups.

5. Give participants an idea as to what will be happening, and when, in the course, linking these to certain days or sessions. Explain what is beyond the context of the training course, and why.

6. At the end of the training course, summarize the main expectations on a flip-chart using keywords and initiate a discussion in order to see which expectations were met and which one's weren't, and why.

Comments

Linking expectations to specific sessions: if the expectations are well formulated and specific enough, you can paste them on the agenda flow. This will clearly show participants when their expectations will be met and will remind you to refer to certain expectations during different sessions throughout the training course.

Encouraging self-directed learning: another idea is to ask participants to paste their expectations on their own picture made during the session 'Getting to know each other', to encourage them to focus upon and monitor their learning during the training program.

Developing norms

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> have agreed on guidelines for group functioning during the training

Materials

Flip-chart with some suggested norms

Time

30 minutes

Steps

1. Explain that as most of us don't know each other very well yet but have to do this training together, it is useful to agree on how we want to work together. Explain that this is done by agreeing upon certain guidelines or norms.

2. Explain that you will give some examples as to how to do this and the group will then have to come up with more. Display a number of norms one by one. Ask them if they think it is a useful norm and whether everybody agrees with it. Examples:

   - *Everyone has the right to understand*
   - *Any question is a good question*
   - *Everybody should have a chance to participate*
   - *Everybody has a responsibility to participate*
   - *We help each other learn*
   - *No smoking in the room*
   - *etc.*

3. Get participants to form buzz groups. Ask participants to think for a couple of minutes about norms they want to add and share these in their buzz groups. Tell them they can reflect on other training experiences if they want to.

4. Ask each buzz group one by one for their suggestions for other norms. Add the norms to the display list if everybody agrees.

5. Explain that as the training course evolves we can refer to these norms so as to remind each other as to how we agreed to work together. We can modify these norms and add others when necessary.

6. Reflect on the exercise by asking participants whether they have done this before, what they think the purpose of the exercise is, and whether they would include it in their own training programs.

Comments

The ownership of norms is very important. If participants see them as rules forced upon them, the activity will be counter-effective. It is important that

participants formulate their own norms together as a group. Post the norms permanently in a visible place. Whenever there is a problem with group dynamics refer back to these norms or ask for suggestions for new ones.

This session could either be used after "Setting the Context" in order to establish a conducive environment for learning, or after the session "What is Facilitation", as participants may appreciate the role of norms in group functioning better.

Benchmarking facilitation

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> have had the opportunity to practice their facilitation skills in a safe environment with the rest of the group

> have received and contributed to group feedback

> are aware of their strengths and weaknesses in facilitation

> have created their own action list in order to improve upon their facilitation skills during the course

> are familiar with the use of video for personal skill improvement*

At the end of the session trainers...

> have assessed the skill levels of participants at the beginning of the course

Materials

1. Copied assessment sheet and action plan
2. Video camera and tripod
3. Numbers for drawing lots

Time

Overall time depends on the number of participants in each group. Allow 15 minutes introduction and 5 minutes practice for each person. Time spent on reflection should be no more than 15 minutes. There must be enough time to watch the video (which again is dependent on group numbers). At least half an hour is required for the self-assessment part of the session.

Steps

1. Introduce the session by explaining that this session is called benchmarking facilitation skills as this is the first session in which participants will be asked to practice their facilitation skills in a safe and secure atmosphere.

2. Explain the comfort, stretch, panic model (see page 25) and tell participants that in this session they should stay in their comfort zones. For this session we just need to warm up and get used to using the video camera.

3. Explain that everyone in the group is encouraged to practice their facilitation skills in this session. Each person is given only five minutes. As everyone will have a go there is no need to feel nervous. All participants are in the same position. If necessary make the point that if somebody feels extremely uncomfortable with this they may opt out, although they are encouraged to be brave. Participants will be asked to practice throughout this course and it is better to start early.

4. Give participants the group task sheet. Read it aloud to make sure all participants understand the task.

5. Explain that participants will draw lots (make sure there are enough numbers for all participants (e.g. one to six) and that the draw will determine the order for starting.

6. Explain that the video camera will be rolling throughout the process but there is no need to pay attention to this. The video will be used later when it is time for reflection.

7. Explain that a short bell will ring to let participants know when to change over. Participants should continue the facilitation process where others left off, NOT restart the process at the beginning again.

8. Ask participants who are not acting as facilitators to play the part of "meeting delegates" involved in the group task.

9. Start the task with the participant who drew number one. If there are two trainers one trainer can observe the group and keep the process on track and the other can be responsible for the camera and timing of events

10. At the end of the process ask participants to de-role and immediately reflect on the process. This gives participants a chance to externalize their initial feelings. Do not spend too long on this.

11. After a short break bring the group back together and play back the video to them. When there is a group reaction or when you feel there is a learning point to be made stop the video and ask questions such as:

    ◎ *What happened? What did the facilitator do? How did the group react? What would the group have liked to have seen the facilitator do in that situation?*

12. Distribute the facilitation skills self-assessment form and ask participants to complete it.

13. When participants have completed the form, distribute the action list. Explain that this will help them focus their attention on the learning process during this course. This will enhance the effectiveness of the course and improve their facilitation skills in the future. Quickly brainstorm possible situations and events that can be used to practice facilitation skills during the course. This can be done any time, not just in the group during the training sessions but also in small group work, during the breaks, and in the evening hours etc.

14. Ask participants to share their action plans informally.

15. Wrap up the session by explaining that there will be many more opportunities for practicing and improving skills during the course and that this was just the start. Bring participants back to the comfort, stretch, panic model and repeat that in this session we stayed in the comfort zone but as the course progresses we will be asking participants to stretch themselves even further.

Comments

The main objective of this session is for trainers and the group to get a feel for the level of participants' skills in the group. Do not try to reflect on everything that happens but focus on the basics of interaction between the facilitator and the group.

* Video is an extremely powerful learning tool in this session as it enables participants to see themselves directly as both a facilitator and a group member. However, in case you do not have access to video equipment, you can also do the session by using a longer reflection time in which you reconstruct the process in a more detailed manner.

Spend the money!

You are a group of meeting delegates who all work for a successful international non-government organization. In the last few years your organization has been through many changes and you have all had to work very hard and many extra working hours.

Recently there has been an announcement that as the staff of the organization have been working so hard recently with no extra pay the board of directors has allocated a total amount of US$ 10,000 for a staff retreat and entertainment weekend. There are up to 200 staff in your office.

As a group you now need to decide how to spend the money!

The only constraints are:

> all employees have to go to the same place and participate in some of the same activities

> the US$ 10,000 must be spent on one weekend break and cannot be divided into smaller sums for different activities

When you are not a facilitator in this session you are to participate in the discussion like an employee of the organization. When you are a facilitator (for just five minutes!) stay in your comfort zone and just take over the role from the previous person.

Facilitation skills self assessment form

Explanation

The table below lists a variety of facilitation skills. Read each skill and reflect as to how much you have mastered this facilitation skill. Rank yourself from 1 (=poor) to 5 (=highly skilled). Then rank yourself how you wish to be, keeping in mind the types of activities you will have to facilitate.
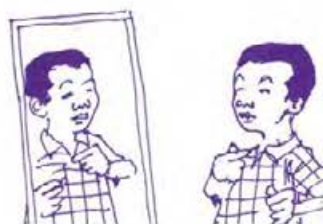
Facilitation skill	Rank now	Want to be
1. Listen attentively		
2. Observe body language and group interactions		
3. Ask the group questions		
4. Answer questions from the group		
5. Summarize what somebody has said		
6. Summarize group discussions		
7. Give feedback to individuals		
8. Give feedback to a group		
9. Be open to receive feedback from the group		
10. Encourage quiet people to speak		
11. Encourage dominant people to listen to others		
12. Facilitate an open discussion during which all group members can share their ideas and participate		

Scoring:

> 1 = poor
> 2 = little idea
> 3 = some idea
> 4 = skilled
> 5 = highly skilled

Which facilitation skill do I want to work on?	Tick the activities most suitable for improving the selected skill.	Write down what you have learned about yourself while improving this skill, during the course.
1.	☐ Observe trainers ☐ Practice during lunch or in the evening ☐ Practice as a group member in small groups ☐ Practice as a facilitator during small group work ☐ Request feedback from….	
2.	☐ Observe trainers ☐ Practice during lunch or in the evening ☐ Practice as a group member in small groups ☐ Practice as a facilitator during small group work ☐ Request feedback from….	
3.	☐ Observe trainers ☐ Practice during lunch or in the evening ☐ Practice as a group member in small groups ☐ Practice as a facilitator during small group work ☐ Request feedback from….	
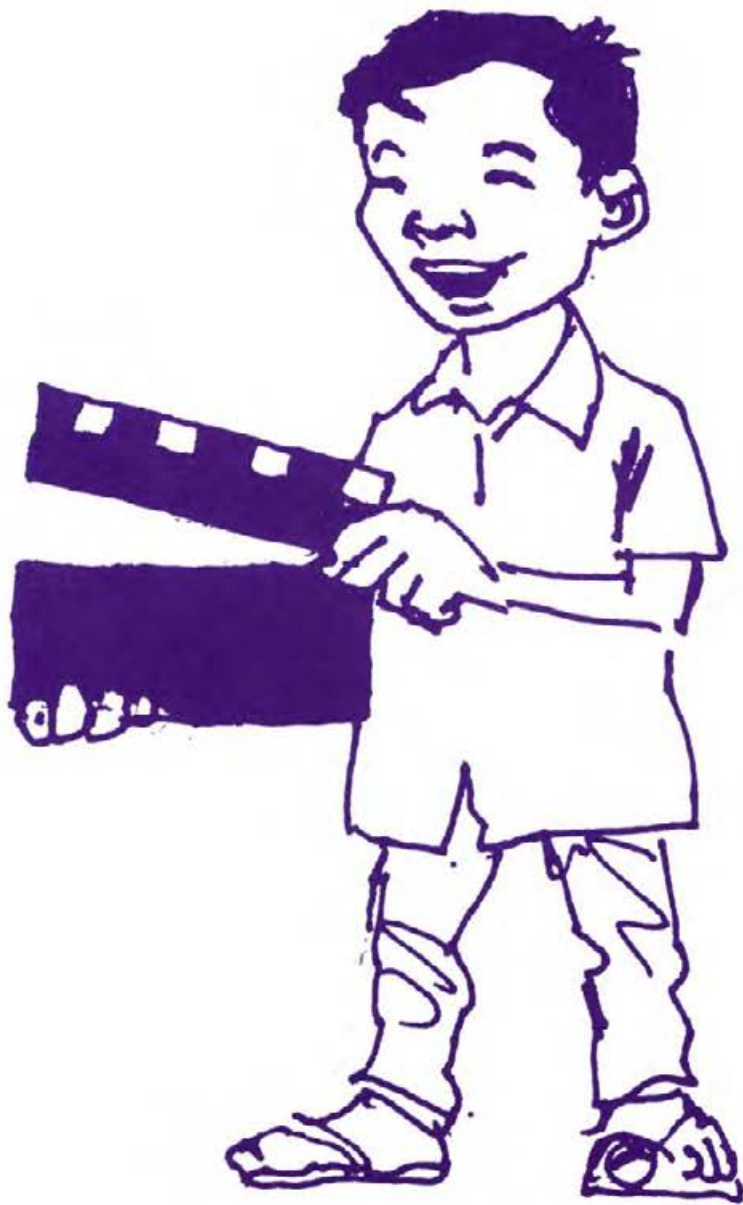
3. Participatory decision-making

- Values of participatory decision-making
- Participatory decision-making process
- Introducing divergent thinking
- Introducing groan zone
- Introducing convergent thinking

Values of participatory decision-making

Objectives

At the end of the session participants

> can differentiate between various levels of participation in the decision-making processes relating to community forestry initiatives and place them on a continuum

> can explain the four core values of participation on the right hand side of the continuum

Materials

1. Flip-chart with continuum of participation
2. Copies of case studies and hand-outs

Time

2 hours

Steps

1. Introduce the session by explaining that before we start talking about facilitation we need to pay attention to the fundamental links between facilitation and participation.
2. Quickly brainstorm what is meant by participation.
3. Explain that we will analyze participation by using a short case study.
4. Divide the participants into groups of four and distribute the case study to each group. Ask them to begin the group task, allowing 40 minutes. Encourage the group to record their answers on flip-charts as they go along.
5. After 40 minutes gather the groups, and ask them to display their results. Compare and discuss the outcome. Question by question.
6. Initiate a discussion asking the following questions:
   - Can the level of participation of various stakeholders change during the process?
   - When can we call a decision participatory and when can't we?
   - Should we try to make any decision as participatory as possible? Is there an 'ideal' level of participation?
7. Post the "Continuum of Participation" on the wall and discuss it with the participants, making sure they understand the different levels in participatory decision-making. Ask them where the case study would fit on the continuum. Try and get them to see that there are two ways of looking at the continuum – either from their own project or organizational perspective or from an individual meeting/workshop perspective. An individual usually works in an environment that has many constraints. There are far less constraints in a workshop so you are more in control.
8. Ask participants why they think it is important to be able to differentiate between these levels of participation as a facilitator.
9. Introduce the four core values of participation during which stakeholders take an active part in the decision-making process (right hand side of the continuum).
10. Distribute the hand-out.

Highland culture versus forest exploitation

Case Study From Ratnakiri, Cambodia

Read the case study and answer the questions below

In Svay village, the loggers and road builders first appeared in March of 1999, and immediately began building a road directly into the village forest. There had been trucks and other equipment in the area for some time but the villagers didn't know why they were there. The villagers had "dreamed" that they should stop the equipment from coming, so a pig was sacrificed to pay respect to the spirits. But the equipment still came. The villagers were angry with the logging and managed to hijack the equipment. After negotiations they agreed to some compensation and the equipment was released.

When the villagers asked for clarification at provincial level, forestry officials showed an official document giving the company permission to log in the village forest. Villagers were informed that they could continue to collect fruits, vegetables and other products from the area, and timber for house construction. They were also told that the company had already paid the government for the concession, and that they, the villagers, would have to negotiate any benefits directly with the company.

By mid-May logging had begun. By June the company was logging in the religious (spirit) forests of the village. Villagers believe that if the forest spirits are disturbed by the loggers, the villagers themselves may fall ill and even die.

The villagers were not only worried about the spirits but also about the future of the many kinds of forest products they collect such as bamboo, vines, rattan and kanma leaves. They were aware of the problems of deforestation in other areas and didn't want those problems in their forests. They were angry that neither the company nor the forest department consulted with them before beginning the logging operations. As one villager said, *"We currently have no power. They do not understand and they don't listen. We are ignored and abused. We can no longer properly manage our forests. We can no longer properly manage our livelihoods"*.

As logging continued, tensions rose. The issue was discussed in a provincial workshop organized with the support of NGOs and international organizations working in the province. Officials acknowledged that there were many unresolved issues in the concession management plan and that villagers had been allowed little or no participation in the granting or the planning of the concession. It was also clear that there was little understanding of the villagers' concepts of spirit forests or other animist beliefs amongst government officials. The province agreed to support a study to assess how the spiritual and traditional beliefs of the villagers affect land use management. The study was to identify and map areas of the forest that highlanders regarded as culturally significant, in order to properly identify those areas that should be excluded from logging.

In your group think about the following:

1. Who are the stakeholders in this case?
2. How were these different stakeholders involved in this story?
3. Did their roles change? How and why?
4. When did the conflict start and why did it happen?
5. What was done to solve the problem? Was the solution sustainable? Why?
6. How could the conflict have been avoided?

Levels and values of participatory decision-making

Different levels of participatory decision-making

The words "participatory decision-making" covers a wide range of levels of involvement. It is important to be able to differentiate between the different levels of participation in decision-making, as they require different facilitation approaches, skills and techniques. It will not always be feasible or necessary to aim for the right hand side of the continuum. Which level of participatory decision-making to aim for will depend on factors such as: purpose of the initiative, complexity of, and stakes in, the issue, urgency of the issue, and available human and financial resources.

Most powerful stakeholder

All stakeholders

| Most powerful stakeholder announces decision | Most powerful stakeholder "sells" the decision | Most powerful stakeholder presents tentative decision for discussion | Joint analysis but final decision still with most powerful stakeholder | Inputs, analysis and decisions made jointly by all stakeholders |

The four core values of participatory decision-making

Mutual understanding

In order for a group of stakeholders to reach a sustainable agreement, the members need to understand and accept the reasoning behind one another's needs and goals. A basic sense of acceptance and understanding allows people to develop innovative ideas that incorporate everyone's point of view.

Full participation

During participatory processes, all stakeholders are encouraged to be actively involved, and to say what's on their minds. This strengthens people in several ways. Stakeholders become more courageous in raising difficult issues. They learn how to share their needs and opinions. And, in the process, they learn to discover and acknowledge the diversity of opinions and backgrounds of all stakeholders involved.

These core values are only generated when stakeholders take an active part in the decision-making process!

Inclusive solutions

Inclusive solutions are wise solutions. They are made by integrating everybody's perspectives and needs. These solutions have the advantage of reflecting the true picture, and the perspectives of not only the powerful and influential, but also of the truth held by the marginalized and the weak.

Shared responsibility

During participatory processes, stakeholders feel a strong sense of responsibility for creating and developing sustainable agreements. They recognize that they must be willing and able to implement the proposals they develop, so they make every effort to give and receive input before final decisions are made. This contrasts sharply with the conventional assumption that everyone will be held accountable for the consequences of decisions made by a few key people.

Participatory decision-making process

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> can explain why decision-making processes are never straightforward
> can draw and explain the diamond model of participatory decision-making
> can explain why field facilitators need to understand these dynamics

Materials

1. Copied transparency of "The World is Flooded" exercise
2. Big flip-chart with diamond model (see hand-out)
3. Copied hand-out

Time

1 hour 30 minutes

Steps

1. Introduce the session by telling participants that we will now look at the process of participatory decision-making processes.
2. Run a quick brainstorm whether participants have had any experience with participatory decision-making.
3. Explain that we will start this session with a fun activity for which you will need five volunteers. Explain that the others will be observers.
4. Introduce the scene, outline the characters and explain the tasks of the five decision-makers and the observers. Stress that you will allow them only 15 minutes to come to a decision.
5. Stop the simulation after 15 minutes sharp, whether a decision has been made or not.
6. Invite everybody to take their normal seats again and help participants reflect on the process by asking questions such as:
   - *What happened? How did you start? What happened next?*
   - *How did you discuss the different ideas in the group? Was there any disagreement and, if so, how was this resolved?*
   - *Was a decision made? If not, why not? If yes, how did you make the decision? Whose decision was it? How did the group come to an agreement? What did you base your decision on?*
   - *How does this game relate to participatory decision-making in reality?*
7. Based on the reflection of the energizer, explain that participatory decision-making processes are rather complicated, and very rarely straightforward. Explain the myths and realities of these kinds of processes by following the flow of the hand-out of the different pictures of myth and reality.
8. Post the diamond flip-chart where everyone can see and explain the Divergence and Convergence Zones of the diamond. Make this diamond come

alive by referring to the different scenes that happened during "The World is Flooded" energizer.

9. Explain that during the training program this diamond will be the backbone. Explain that each stage will be emphasised during different sessions during the course.

10. Distribute the hand-out.

Comments

It may be necessary to explain to participants when relating to the diamond model that the simulation provided the ideas for discussion and they did not really experience the Divergence Zone. However, this is intentional to speed up the decision-making process in the simulation.

If, during the simulation, participants decide to vote in order to reach a decision, the trainer can utilise this opportunity by helping participants reflect on the difference between voting by majority and reaching consensus. See the hand-out of the session "Stranded in the bush" (page 228).

The world is going to be flooded

Once upon a time...

A major disaster is going to happen on earth. Due to dramatically accelerated climate change in combination with a most forceful hurricane and spring tide, the whole of Asia will be flooded apart from a small mountain peak in the Himalayas. Unfortunately the area is only big enough to accommodate five people over the period of time that is needed for the water to recede to normal levels.

Your team, based on their background and experience, has been elected to select the five people from the following list that will be given the chance to survive on this mountain peak. Who would you choose?

1. A healthy midwife with a lot of experience
2. A cook who is innovative and able to make use of all kinds of ingredients
3. A strong handy-man who knows how to make fire
4. A forest guard, young and fit with a gun
5. A medical doctor, experienced in surgery
6. A female trainer for many survival camps in the Himalayas
7. An inventor who has invented all sorts of ingenious but simple things
8. A medicine man who is very old and wise, and able to make use of local plants
9. A natural leader, able to bring out the best of a group
10. A famous artist
11. A handsome film star with a great talent for acting
12. A water engineer with experience in finding water and digging wells
13. A hunter who can identify and catch many types of animals
14. A fisherwoman who can make her own fishing tools
15. A farmer who knows how to plant rice under difficult conditions
16. A trader who is very good in business

Facilitating participatory decision-making

Myth or Reality?

What are the realities of group decision-making?

Decision point

Most people who work in groups believe that the picture above illustrates group decision-making in a theoretical sense. When a new topic comes up in a group each person has several ideas (represented by the circles). Everyone appears to be tracking everyone else's ideas, mostly at the same pace, and everybody is on top of the situation.

Unfortunately, when a person's experience does not match the above model they believe it is because their own group is defective in some way. If people behaved as the picture suggests group decision-making would be much less frustrating but, in reality, real-life groups don't work this way!

Definite Reality!
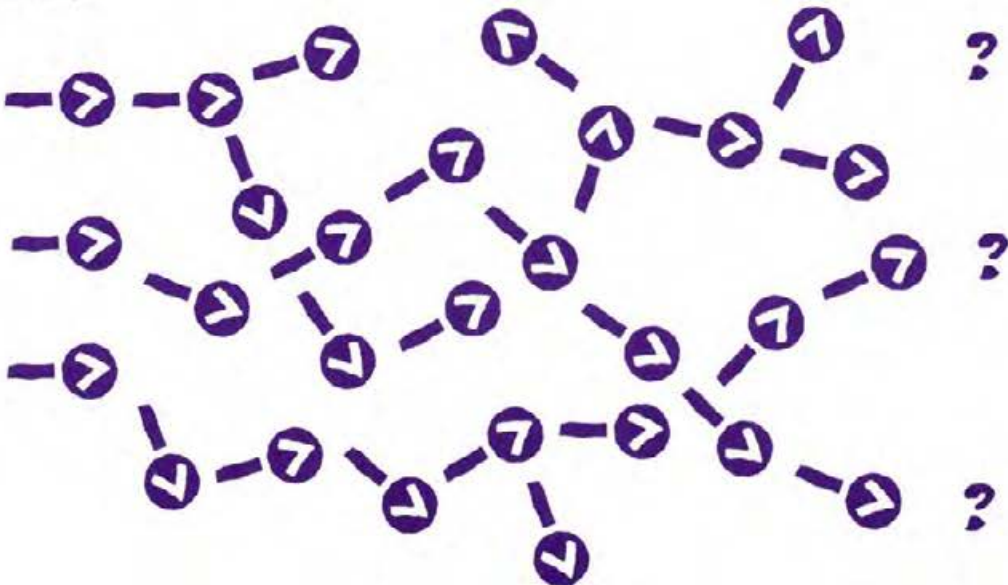
Why do field facilitators need to understand the dynamics of group decision-making?

Try to think of all the instances as a field facilitator in which you are requested to facilitate a group decision-making process. You will realize that in most meetings between users or villagers a decision of some sort may need to be made.

The situation in the second picture is probably familiar to many field facilitators. As with all other groups, it is important to remember villagers and users are all human.

Similarly, group members are also human. This means:

> we do go off on tangents
> we do lose track of the central themes
> we do get too attached to our ideas
> we do have divergent points of view

When such characteristics are evident in a discussion many members and facilitators feel that the discussion is heading out of control. However, in many instances, this could be a step towards greater creativity and more creative solutions, and should be seen positively.

For these reasons it is essential that field facilitators understand some of the dynamics of group decision-making.

Field facilitation situations where decision-making in a group is required

- Identifying priorities
- Designing an experiment
- Planning rules and regulations
- Problem solving
- Formulating a resource management plan

The diamond of participatory decision-making
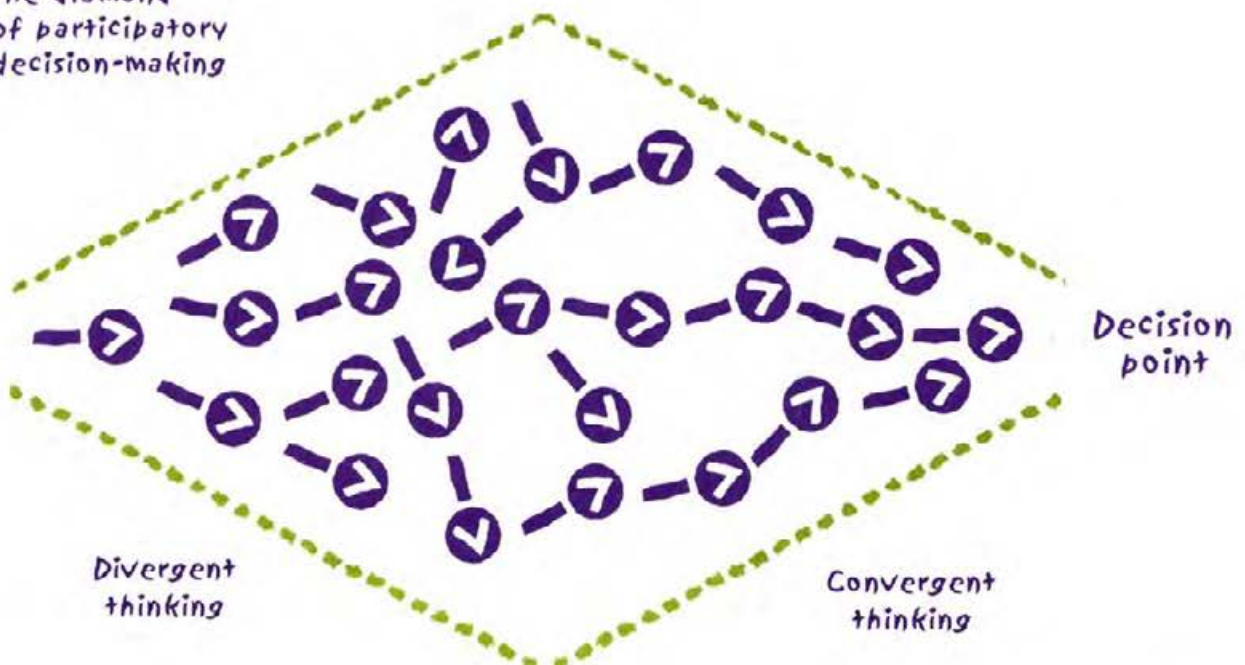
Divergent thinking

Convergent thinking

Decision point

Introducing divergent thinking

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

➢ can explain the risks of making hastened decisions in groups
➢ can explain what divergent thinking is and how to support it as a facilitator
➢ can explain why brainstorming is a good activity to do during divergence thinking

Materials

Copied hand-outs

Time

2 hours

Steps

1. Introduce the session by explaining that we will take a closer look at the first phase of the decision-making model, the Divergent Zone.

2. Get participants to think about their own experiences and ask them whether decisions made by groups always get carried out? Why are decisions often not implemented or, if they are, not successful?

3. Give a short lecturette following the flow of the hand-out, building up the diagrams as your story enfolds about hastened decisions, why they happen, how to prevent them and the characteristics of divergent thinking.

4. Introduce brainstorming or free listing as an activity that is very helpful during this zone, if it is well used.

5. Run a brainstorm that focuses on what "brainstorming" is all about and why we use it. Follow the process on how to run a brainstorm session outlined in the hand-out. Cluster the answers into main categories.

6. Reflect on the brainstorming session by asking participants the following questions:
   ◎ What did I do during the brainstorm? Why?
   ◎ What did I do after the brainstorm? Why?
   ◎ What should one not do while facilitating a brainstorm?

7. Divide the participants into groups of four to six people and ask them to run a quick brainstorming session on an issue of interest to the group (15 minutes).

8. Ask the groups to gather and reflect on the experience by asking:
   ◎ What went well? What could be improved?
   ◎ What was easy? What was difficult? Why?
   ◎ What tricks can we use to ensure full participation?

9. Encourage participants to observe the process of brainstorming during the course and tell them that there will be more opportunities to practice.

10. Summarize the feelings of people in the Divergence Zone and the role a facilitator plays during this zone.

11. Distribute the hand-out.

Comments

Most people have heard about brainstorming and many people think they know how to do it. However, the ground rules of free listing without censoring and discussion are often not followed. Make sure that these rules are understood before - and reflected upon after - the practice.

Divergent thinking

The risk of business-as-usual decisions

When a group tries to solve a difficult problem as if it were an easy one, they will very likely make a decision that simply does not work. Groups can pressure themselves into solving tough problems by having a 'business-as-usual' discussion. They generate ideas or solutions that sound good at the time but later on, after implementation has failed, realize they were artificial.

Business as usual

New topic — Decision point — Familiar opinions — Same old topic — Decision point — Familiar opinions
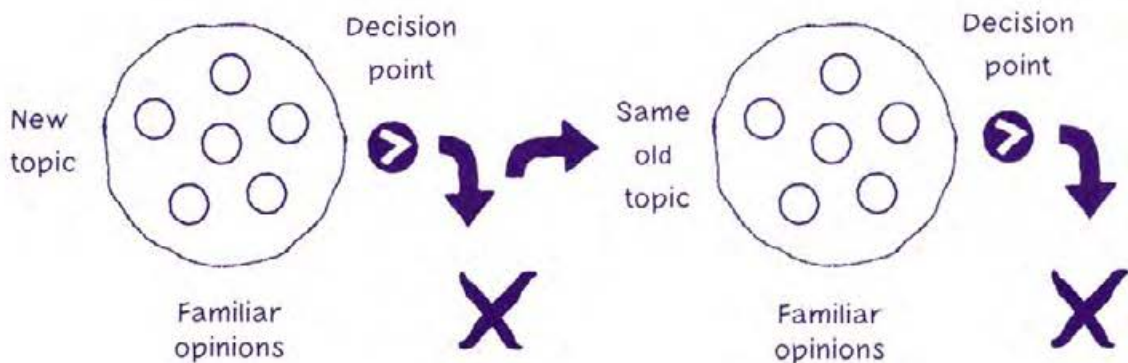
Why do 'business-as-usual' decisions happen?

Artificial solutions don't solve anything, they only give group members a temporary feeling of closure so they can feel they have accomplished something without having to go through all the lengthy discussions and meetings required.

Often groups don't realize how much effort it takes to reach a sustainable decision. They share familiar opinions but do not hunt for creative options. In general, groups prefer to focus on conventional options that are easy to discuss rather than search for new ideas or alternatives, or take different perspectives into account.

Examples of fake decisions

- Agree on the top 20 priorities
- Delegate the job to someone who is already overworked
- Create a committee to do the same work all over again
- Create a program knowing there is no funding
- Make an agreement that will not be accepted by someone who is not present
- Agree to 'try harder' from now on

How can a group prevent 'business-as-usual' decisions from happening?

First of all a group needs to be able to differentiate between easy and difficult problems. If the original range of options has a workable solution, then great! Decisions that can be made quickly should be made quickly. But if the original range of options does not provide a workable solution, then more work lies ahead. The goal in such groups is not just to reach a decision, but to reach a sustainable decision - that is, to come to an agreement or solution that works.

BUT HOW DO WE PRIORITIZE OUR PRIORITIES?

PRIORITIES

Divergent zone

Familiar opinions

Attempted decision

Diverse perspectives

Common group feelings

- Hope
- Aliveness
- Curiosity
- Relief
- Thoughtfulness

The need for divergent thinking

In order to solve tough problems groups need to go beyond sharing only familiar options or ideas, or just one perspective. They need to engage in divergent thinking. Divergent thinking expands the range of ideas that can be discussed further.

How to support divergent thinking in a group?

The facilitator's main task in the Divergent Zone is to create opportunities for everyone to express their views and ideas. At this phase of the discussion, the facilitator does not even try to resolve disagreements. S/he honors everything everyone says and avoids asking anyone to revise or reconsider their opinions.

The facilitator can support the group by suggesting structured activities, such as brainstorming ideas. In the Divergence Zone groups may worry that their diversity might overwhelm them. They feel relieved at the thought that the process is "under control". Facilitators can offer suggestions with confidence knowing that they will usually be well received.

Role of Facilitator

- ▣ Alert the group of 'business-as-usual' discussions

- ▣ Help the group avoid making decisions too quickly by pointing out how limited their input is

- ▣ Encourage everyone to contribute

- ▣ Think about the tools and skills needed for learning about other diverse points of view

- ▣ Suggest ways to structure thinking activities

- ▣ Honor everything everyone says

- ▣ Don't ask people to revise or reconsider their opinions

- ▣ Encourage people to raise difficult issues or challenges

Brainstorming and listing
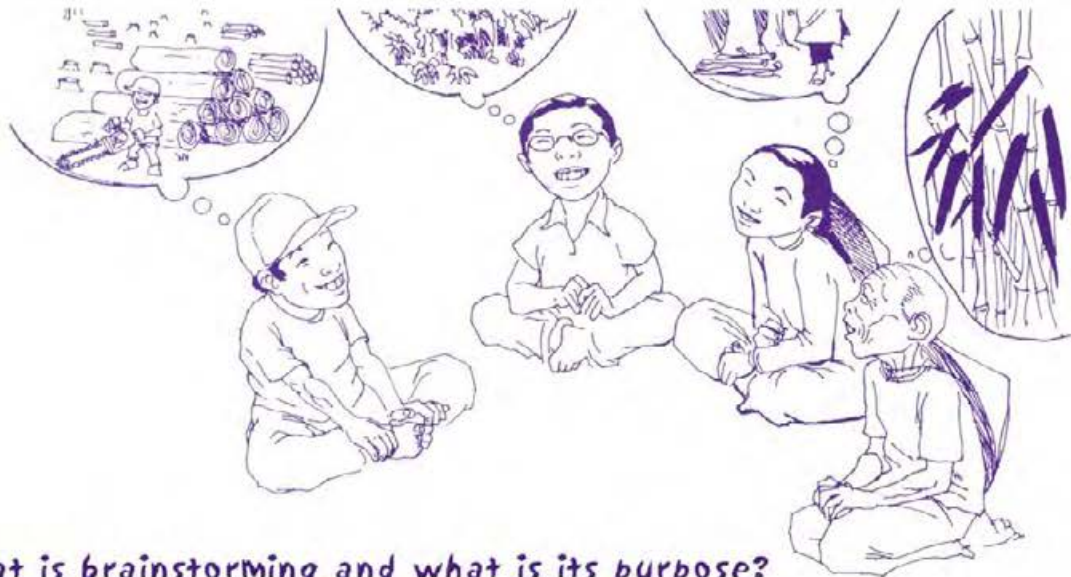
What is brainstorming and what is its purpose?

Brainstorming is a free listing of ideas in which everybody's contribution is valued. Although most people seem to understand the term, there is still a lot of confusion about its actual use.

Brainstorms can be used for different purposes in different situations to:

- assess the understanding and/or experience of the group about an issue. This is done while introducing a new issue or topic and can give you a sense of how familiar the group is with it.
- energize or break the ice. This is done during a presentation. It is a very quick way to get the whole group to focus their thinking.
- jumpstart a discussion. This helps a group quickly identify many aspects about the subject even if they are just beginning to think about it.
- show diversity within a group. Brainstorming will draw out a wide range of thoughts on a given topic.
- generate a list of ideas relating to a difficult problem.
- bring a large group back together again after people have been working in small groups. It is the fastest way to share the main points of the various discussions in the small groups.

What can you brainstorm about?

Most groups use brainstorming for very limited purposes – generating lists of needs or solutions to a problem. But it is possible to use brainstorming for many different things depending upon the purpose of the exercise. Here are some examples of things which can be brainstormed:

- lessons from the past
- causes of common problems
- new goals

- unexpressed concerns
- hidden beliefs or assumptions
- helpful people and resources
- sources of inspiration
- ways to build teamwork
- obstacles/opportunities to meeting new goals
- ways to improve how a meeting is run

How to run a brainstorm?

1. Arrange the room.
2. Ask everybody to move the chairs so they face the writing area (blackboard or flip-chart).
3. Clarify and post the following ground rules.
   > Anyone may put anything on the list that seems relevant to her or him (even confusing and silly ideas).
   > There should be no arguing about whether or not something belongs on the list.
   > There should be no discussion. Ideas should be just called out.
4. Post the group's task in the form of a question.
5. Ask for one or more volunteers to serve as chart writers. Ask them to record all contributions using clear handwriting. A visual record often sparks further contributions without censoring.
6. Start listing ideas. Ask people to call out their ideas one at a time. If anyone begins arguing or discussing an item, politely remind the whole group of the ground rules.
7. Continue until there are no more ideas. Sometimes you may feel that all the useful ideas have already been contributed, but it is important to wait until everybody has had an opportunity. This is a way of fostering participants' sense of ownership over the whole range of ideas, which will then be explored and developed.
8. Towards the end of the allotted time, let participants know there are only two more minutes. This often results in one final burst of ideas.

What can you do with the list of ideas generated?

It is important to conclude the brainstorming exercise. If the list is not too long debrief by reflecting on the list as a whole. Ask the group what they think of the list. In most cases, though, the generated list is long. Therefore the group has to find a way of reducing the list to a manageable number of items. This can be done in various ways:

1. Creating categories and sorting items into them.
2. Grouping the items in clusters and naming them. Clustering is a challenging task for any group and therefore the facilitator can play an important role in this step.
3. The group can decide to prioritize what's on the list e.g. the most needed, the most urgent or the most practical. Sub-groups can be assigned the task of expanding on promising ideas.

Do's

> Do treat silly ideas the same as serious ideas.

> Do encourage people to take turns.

> Unblock the flow by asking people to think of opposites, what-ifs, variations, add-ons, etc.

> Allow the whole group to think first and jot down ideas before sharing them, to allow the 'slower' people to contribute as well.

> Ask people to write their ideas on cards. Collect the cards and post them.

> Keep the output of brainstorms in view e.g. post the flip-chart on the wall. Show participants that you value the results of brainstorming sessions by referring to these flip-charts as the meeting progresses. It is also never too late to add further ideas to flip-charts produced earlier.

Don'ts

> Don't interrupt.

> Don't reject any ideas.

> Don't force anyone to contribute.

> Don't say 'we have got that one'.

> Don't say 'ooh, good one'.

> Don't show any body/facial signs of disapproval.

> Don't favor the 'best' thinkers.

> Don't give up the first time the group seems stuck.

> Don't try to be the facilitator and chart-writer at the same time.

> Don't rush or pressure the group. Silence usually means people are thinking!

Introducing the groan zone

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> can explain the dynamics of, and feelings arising from, the process of turning divergence into convergence - that is the so-called Groan Zone.

> can explain why the Groan Zone is necessary and the role the facilitator can play in supporting the group

Materials

1. Facilitator's sheet, exercise cards and observation sheet photocopied for each small group

2. Separate rooms/places where each small group will go to solve the puzzle

3. Groups of six people (one facilitator and five group members, any extra people can serve as observers)

Time

2 hours 30 minutes

Steps

1. Explain that we will practice the facilitation of problem solving during this session, based on a simulation exercise. Participants will form small groups. Each group will receive a puzzle or problem to solve. Each member of the group has some pieces of information that is needed to solve the problem. The facilitator is there to guide the group towards finding the solution and has not been given the solution either.

2. Distribute the information cards, flip-charts, markers and small cards or post-its to the small groups and allow them about 30 minutes to find the solution. Ask the winning team to display their solution and explain how they reached it (or do it yourself if none of the groups succeeded in the allocated time).

3. Get facilitators to reflect on the exercise by asking questions such as the following:

    ◎ *How did it go? How do you feel? What did you do? How did you start? What did you do next? What happened?*

    ◎ *What went well? What was difficult? Why? (Often people will say that it is difficult to facilitate problem solving if you do not have the solution yourself, and often the group gets stuck at some point and becomes frustrated or may even fall apart or loses interest.)*

    ◎ *What did you do to overcome this problem? What else could you have done to overcome this difficulty?*

    ◎ *Did the group help you or help themselves? If the group did help you how did they do it? Did you support the initiatives of the group? If not, why not? If yes, how?*

    ◎ *What could you do differently next time?*

Get group members to reflect on the exercise by asking the following questions:

- ◎ *Were you able to share your piece of information with the group? Did you get a chance to understand the other pieces of information?*
- ◎ *Did the facilitator support the group when they tried to piece together the information (or did s/he analyze her/himself)? How did s/he do that? What helped you?*
- ◎ *What could s/he have done to help you more?*

Questions to everyone:

- ◎ *How is this simulation exercise relevant to facilitating villagers or multi-stakeholders in participatory problem solving? What would be similar? What would be different? (Although this simulation focuses on problem solving rather than decision-making it still provides an opportunity for participants to understand the importance of mutual understanding which is critical in both situations.)*

4. Ask the group if they have ever experienced any similar situations in their own field experience. Ask them in buzz groups to list the main difficulties they have experienced when facilitating decisions in a group of villagers.

5. Summarize the session by giving a short talk on the concept of the Groan Zone in group decision-making emphasizing that it is not a negative stage but an integral part of the decision-making process. Use the list of difficulties generated by the group to link theory with practice.

6. Distribute the hand-out.

Comments

The puzzle is quite difficult to solve but this is done on purpose in order to simulate real life problems which are often never easy to solve. However, it might leave both the groups and the facilitators feeling frustrated or with a sense of failure. It is therefore important as a trainer to address these feelings during the reflection exercise and explain that the purpose of the session is not to solve the problem but to learn from the process.

Facilitate your team in solving the following problem:

Problem:

Which riders ride on which horses during the morning and afternoon on the third of July 2000?

Your task is to help the group to solve the problem, but not to solve it yourself!

Procedure

1. Write the problem out on a flip-chart or white board.
2. Explain the following rules and guidelines:
   - *you are allowed to tell people what is on your cards*
   - *but you are not allowed to show your card to anyone*
   - *you can only solve the problem by integrating the information from each person*
   - *some of the information will be superfluous and not related.*
3. Ask everybody to contribute his or her information to the group and make sure that all the information is understood by everybody.
4. Ask the group how these facts are related and try to put them together in a big picture.
5. Eventually ask the group to try and draw some conclusions and find the solution.

Copy these cards, cut them out and distribute them to five members of each group

---

Exercise: Analyze and solve the following problem in your team
You are allowed to tell people what is written below, but you are not allowed to show your card to anyone.
- Runner is a horse with a mix of an Arab and French. That makes him a very fast horse but also difficult to ride.
- Peter appeared often with Podargo, his favorite horse, at competitions.
- Towards the beginning of the evening the riders decided to organize a jumping competition. Mike was first with Black Beauty, and Rita came second with a horse that was not her own. Therefore, she is definitely a first class rider.

Exercise: Analyze and solve the following problem in your team
You are allowed to tell people what is written below, but you are not allowed to show your card to anyone.
- After the third refusal David had to leave the jumping circuit.
- Every morning every rider rides his/her most favorite horse.
- During jumping competitions, all horses will be brought out of their stables by their riders in the morning and afternoon.
- In the afternoon Peter and Frank exchange horses.

Exercise: Analyze and solve the following problem in your team
You are allowed to tell people what is written below, but you are not allowed to show your card to anyone.
- Julia had a lover she was meeting secretly in the forest.
- Although it was Rita's horse, David rode Sheila, because she was hard to ride as she was on heat.
- After a fifteen minute ride, Frank realized that Chivago had a bad leg. However it was still too early to go to the horse doctor.
- Although the mare Laila was too old to give birth, she was still very much in love with Black Beauty, a big stallion. Laila stayed close to Black Beauty almost all the time.

Exercise: Analyze and solve the following problem in your team
You are allowed to tell people what is written below, but you are not allowed to show your card to anyone.
- There are only two mares (female horses) in the driving school, one of which is on heat.
- David and Rita are not the only couple who always ride together.
- In the evening Frank rode the horse that Rita had ridden the whole day.
- There are three riders who always ride the same horses.

Exercise: Analyze and solve the following problem in your team
You are allowed to tell people what is written below, but you are not allowed to show your card to anyone.
- Runner and Sheila are very happy because they go out together twice on the same day.
- Mike had to visit his grandmother in the morning, which is why he rode his horse early, at 7 o'clock in the morning, to give him the exercise he needed badly.
- The ladies always ride the mares and the gentlemen the stallions (male horses): only seldom is this rule not followed.

Observation sheet

For the observer of the facilitating analysis

The group has to solve a problem. Every team member is given a piece of information They will need to collect all the information in order to come up with the solution. Observe the process of analysis in the group, focusing on the role of the facilitator.

What did the facilitator do to support the group?	What opportunities did the facilitator miss?	Any tips for improvement

	Peter	Frank	David	Rita	Mike	Julia
Morning	Podargo	Chivago	Sheila	Runner	Black Beauty	Laila
Afternoon	Chivago	Podargo	Sheila	Runner	Black Beauty	Laila

The groan zone: struggling from divergence to convergence

What is the Groan Zone?

After groups have engaged in divergent thinking, and before a convergence is reached, they often go through a period of confusion. During this time it is important to share, and perhaps modify, their perspectives in order to generate mutual understanding. This is what is referred to as the Groan Zone. Most people find it very hard to tolerate the feelings that arise in a group when people do not have a shared framework. However, a group's most significant breakthroughs often come after a struggle!

By legitimizing and understanding the Groan Zone and its dynamics, a facilitator can give groups meaningful support during difficult times.

> **Common group feelings**
> - Confusion
> - Aggravation
> - Frustration
> - Perplexity
> - Anxiety
> - Exasperation
> - Disgust
> - Boredom

What can the facilitator do to help the group in the Groan Zone?

The challenge of the facilitator is not to get to a point where you make the decision yourself or you pressure the group to make a decision too early. The job of a facilitator is to understand the dynamics of the process and to think of ways to help all group members move from one zone to the next whereby a decision can be reached in which everyone has contributed.

Groan zone

Divergent thinking

Convergent thinking

Showing trust and confidence in the group

Promoting mutual under-standing

Decision point

Familiar opinions

Attempted decision

Diverse perspectives

No mutual understanding

Mutual understanding

Promoting mutual understanding

The facilitator's main objective in the Groan Zone is to promote mutual understanding. This is anything but easy. The greater the divergence of opinions in the group, the greater is the chance for confusion and misinterpretation. It takes a lot of careful listening. During the Groan Zone you may be the only person who is listening at all! You need to encourage the group to keep struggling with trying to understand each other. This can be done by:

- helping one person stand up to pressure from others
- helping sort out misunderstandings between two people
- helping the whole group focus on the same thing at the same time.

The need for structured activities

The simplest way to help group members to understand each other's perspectives is to encourage them to put themselves in each other's shoes. This can sometimes be done directly by encouraging them to ask questions and to listen carefully to the answers. In other situations people might feel that asking questions is confrontational or rude. Therefore many groups need structured thinking activities to help them understand each other.

## Be prepared to meet resistance or be challenged

Structured activities help the group focus on the same thing at the same time. However, it is not easy for a facilitator to get agreement from the group to do a structured activity. Groups oppose facilitators on a regular basis and this is particularly true for Groan Zone exercises when trust-levels are low and tension-levels are high. Your suggestion for a structured activity may meet resistance because:

- someone thinks it was proposed as a direct personal response to something s/he said
- someone may interpret your suggestion as a power play
- others may feel that it would slow down the discussion or move the group in the wrong direction.

For all these reasons and more, you must expect the group to challenge you, and probably reject a high percentage of your suggestions. When this happens, remember to honor any objections and ask for suggestions. In the Groan Zone, everyone's ideas are frequently misunderstood – and yours will be too! Keep in mind that your role is not to be "right". Your role is to be patient and tolerant, and to show trust and confidence in the group. People are under pressure in the Groan Zone – they need your support!

Role of facilitator

> Sharpen your listening skills
> Encourage the group to keep struggling, and assure them that this struggle is part of the normal process
> Encourage the group to share perspectives
> Honor objections and ask for suggestions
> Be patient
> Be tolerant
> Be flexible
> Above all show trust and confidence in the group.
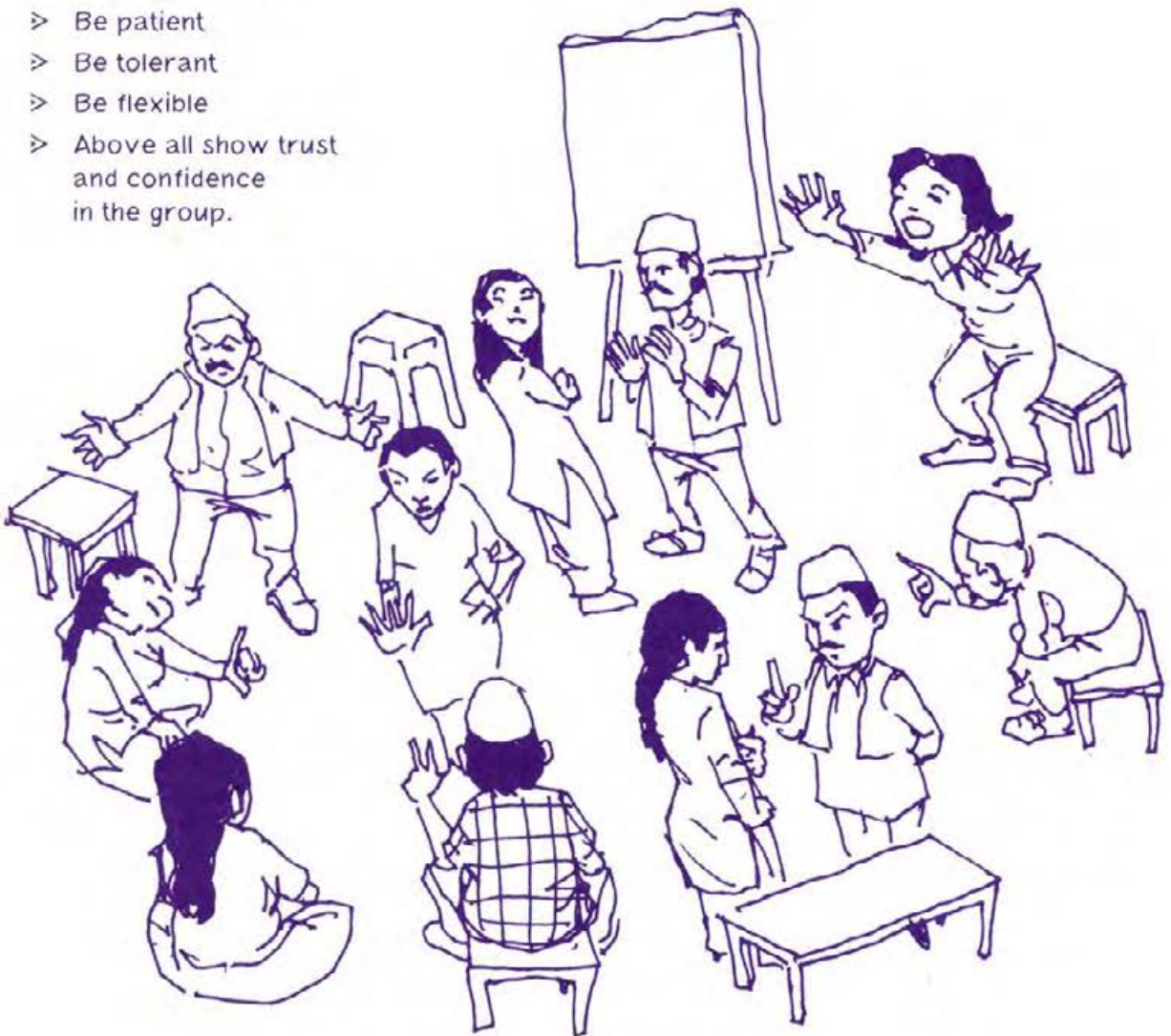
Introducing convergent thinking

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> can explain how to recognize convergent thinking in a group

> can explain how to deal with different moods of group behavior during convergent thinking

Materials

1. Select a picture and cut it up into different-shaped pieces, as many as the number of participants, and shuffle them

2. Diamond model on flip-chart

3. Copied hand-out

Time

45 minutes

Steps

1. Introduce the session by telling participants that we will have a closer look at the last phase of the participatory decision-making process, which is called convergent thinking.

2. Explain that we will start with a quick energizer. Put all the pieces of the puzzle upside down in the middle of the floor and ask everybody to take one piece. Ask them to guess what is depicted on the piece they have in their hands. Invite participants to stand up and put their puzzle together. Ask them questions such as the following: *Is the puzzle complete? How do you know it's complete? How did you put the puzzle together? Where did you start? Who started first? Why? How did you feel when you finished and saw the whole picture? Is the picture the same as, or different to, your original guess? Why?*

3. Ask them to sit down again. Reflect with them on the process by asking participant show they think this relates to convergent thinking. Ask participants to recall again their feelings when they completed the picture. Help participants understand that for some people the eventual picture was different to what they first imagined and for others it was quite similar.

4. Explain that when a group moves into the Convergence Zone all the pieces of a puzzle are presented on the table, and everybody understands what each piece means.

5. Give a short talk on the hand-out, explaining how to recognize when a group moves into the Convergence Zone and what is expected from the facilitator during this phase. Use examples of events and situations experienced by the participants during previous simulations.

6. Explain that this session was just a warm-up as participants move towards the Convergence Zone. Explain that there will be several other sessions focusing on several aspects of this including lots of opportunities for practice.

7. Distribute the hand-out.

Convergent thinking

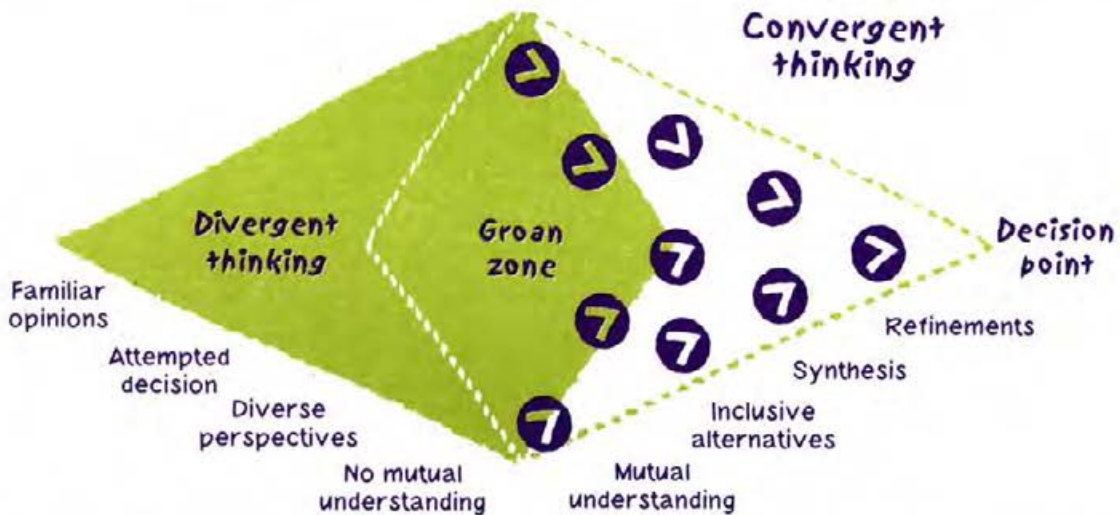## How can you recognize when a group moves into the Convergent Zone?

A group enters the convergent zone when it has developed common understanding. The discussions become much easier. Here are some examples of what can happen:

- someone offers an interesting idea
- others probe to get a better understanding of the idea
- someone else adds something to the idea
- someone blends it with a completely different idea.

This means that group members can realistically include one another's perspectives in their own thinking. When this happens they are on their way to finding a solution that will incorporate everyone's needs and goals. These types of solutions indicate participants are in the Convergent Zone.

Common group feelings
- Imagination
- Focus
- Eagerness
- Clarity
- Confidence

Convergent thinking

Divergent thinking

Groan zone

Decision point

Familiar opinions

Attempted decision

Diverse perspectives

No mutual understanding

Mutual understanding

Inclusive alternatives

Synthesis

Refinements

How can you support convergent thinking in a group?

In the Convergent Zone, the facilitator's main task is to help the group explore alternatives and synthesize them into a solution that will work for everyone. This is often easier than it sounds. Once a group has managed to build a shared framework of understanding, the discussion can move pretty quickly, and quite comfortably, with little intervention. There are exceptions however. Some groups have trouble thinking creatively – they may need help breaking out of their routine type of thinking. There are other groups who get so excited that they are likely to make impulsive decisions that are under-funded and over-committed. Those groups need a facilitator's help to be rigorous, not impulsive, when they fine-tune their thinking more, and help strengthen the logic of their ideas.

Convergent thinking
- Creative thinking
- Evaluating alternatives
- Summarizing key points
- Sorting ideas into categories
- Arriving at a conclusion or decision that works for everyone

4. Facilitation Fundamentals

- ◎ What is facilitation?
- ◎ Conventional versus participatory groups
- ◎ Role of facilitator
- ◎ Skills of facilitator
- ◎ Attitude of facilitator

What is facilitation?

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...
> can explain the different understandings of facilitation
> can explain the rationale behind the focus of the course, i.e. facilitating groups
> can link the courses focus on facilitating groups to their own work
> can explain how effective facilitation can support effective sharing in groups

Materials

1. Three posters with different definitions of facilitation in different corners (see some examples in hand-out)
2. Copied hand-out

Time

1 hour 30 minutes

Steps

1. Start the session by explaining that the term facilitation is being used in many different contexts and for different purposes. Therefore, we need to spend some time working out a common understanding of what it means.
2. Display the three posters reading out the different definitions written on them. Invite everyone to walk to the definition which they agree with the most, based on their own experience in facilitation.
3. Ask participants that choose the same definition to share their reasons for their choice and think of a way they can present their reasoning to the others.
4. After ten minutes ask one group to explain their reasons to the others. If the explanation is not very clear ask them some questions so they can clarify what they mean. Invite the other groups to challenge their explanation.
5. Repeat this procedure for the other groups.
6. Summarize the discussion by explaining that facilitation is actually a very broad concept (making it easy) and that it can be defined and explained in different ways for different contexts. Link this to the whole course by explaining the concept of the three circles. Stress that we need to agree on a common focus at least for the duration of this course. The inner circle is a focus that everyone will have in common.
7. Introduce the definition and function of facilitation as described in the hand-out and link this to the focus of the training program. Share some of the selected quotes in order to provide participants with other viewpoints about facilitation.
8. Give a short talk on the hand-out emphasizing how good facilitation encourages effective sharing in groups.
9. Distribute the hand-out.

Comments

Make sure that at the end of the session participants understand why the focus of this course is on facilitating groups and can translate this focus to the context of the participatory activities in their own jobs.

"Keep the process simple and guidelines clear. Provide the group with structure to do its work, but do not try to control it. Enjoy what you do. Be genuinely yourself and you will be respected." (Based on the teachings of Lao Tzu Chinese hermit-philosopher)

"We learn by trail and error, not by trial and rightness. If we did things correctly every time, we would never have to change directions - wed just continue on the current course and end up with more of the same." (unknown)

"The novice facilitator shows and tells incessantly; the wise facilitator listens, prods, challenges, and refuses to give an answer." (Lao Tzu)

"Do not search for the truth; only cease to cherish opinions (wandering Buddhist monk)

"When they think that they know the answer, people are difficult to guide. When they know that they don't know, people find their own way." (Lao Tzu Chinese hermit-philosopher)

"He who knows, does not speak, he who speaks does not know." (Lao Tzu)

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes." (French Novelist)

"The role of a facilitator is to present to the people, in a challenging form, the issues they themselves have raised in a confused form." (Mao Zedong)

"To trust the other is to let go; it includes an element of risk and a leap into the unknown, which takes courage." (Milton Mayeroff)

"A facilitator only helps all creatures to find their own nature, but does not venture to lead them by the nose." (Lao Tzu)

Always the beautiful answer, who asks a more beautiful question?" (E.E. Cummings)

"To understand is to stand under, which is to look up, which is a good way to understand
Go with the people:
live with them,
learn form them,
love them,
start with what they know,
build with what they have.
But of the best leaders,
when the job is done, the task accomplished,
the people will say;
We have done it ourselves."
(Lao Tzu)

"React to false answers with acceptance, even if you had hoped for a different response. Do everything, except giving the right answer, to lead the person to the solution." (Lao Tzu)

What is facilitation of group processes?

Is facilitation a new fashion or trend?

The concept of facilitation and facilitators is as old as the tribes, who report of this kind of role in ancient times. The current interest for facilitation is actually going back to our roots and appreciating old values and processes. The philosophy, mind set and skills of facilitation have much in common with the approaches used by Buddha and other people involved in non-violent movements over the centuries.

What is the purpose of facilitation in community forestry development?

Effective forest management requires the recognition of the following lessons:

> one of the crucial factors of successful forest management lies in the goodwill and capacity of all stakeholders involved

> if people don't participate in finding solutions to their own problems or are not a part of the decision-making process, implementation will be half-hearted at best, probably misunderstood, and will more likely than not, fail.

How can we apply these two lessons?

By creating a safe environment in which stakeholders can:

> identify and solve problems

> resolve their own conflicts

> make collective decisions

> plan together

> trouble-shoot and

> self-manage

Facilitation enables participatory processes, groups and meetings to be much more productive.

The context of facilitation during this training program

Facilitation is needed at various levels in community forestry development, varying from supporting long-term and complex participatory processes involving multiple stakeholder groups to facilitating one-off meetings with small groups.

The context of facilitation in this training program is the inner-circle; the facilitation of groups, and group processes in meetings.

What does facilitation mean?

Facilitation can be described in many ways. For example it can mean:

> to enable or to make easy, or
> to help people help themselves by simply being there, listening and responding to peoples needs, or
> supporting individuals, groups and organizations during participatory processes.

As the focus for this training program is facilitating groups and meetings we will use the following definition:

Facilitating is the conscious process of assisting a group to successfully achieve its task while functioning as a group

How does good facilitation support effective sharing in groups?

Of all the ideas and experiences that are put forth in the course of a meeting, some get a bit of attention while others disappear as if they had never been said. Why does this happen?

Here is the principle - an idea that is expressed in an easy and interesting way will be taken more seriously by more people. Ideas that are expressed poorly or offensively are harder for others to hear or accept. For example, many people are impatient with others who are very shy or nervous and speak in broken sentences, or who don't master the language well enough.

The drawing on the right illustrates the problem.

In most groups people really want to voice opinions, share their insights, listen to each others experiences and come up with interesting new ideas. But the range and richness of their sharing will be limited by their status and the degree to which they can follow and accept what is being said e.g. villagers are more likely to listen to the village head than to a young woman.

By using good facilitation techniques, a facilitator can be an excellent support to such groups. The next drawing illustrates how less ideas get lost, and more ideas are shared, through the intervention of a facilitator.
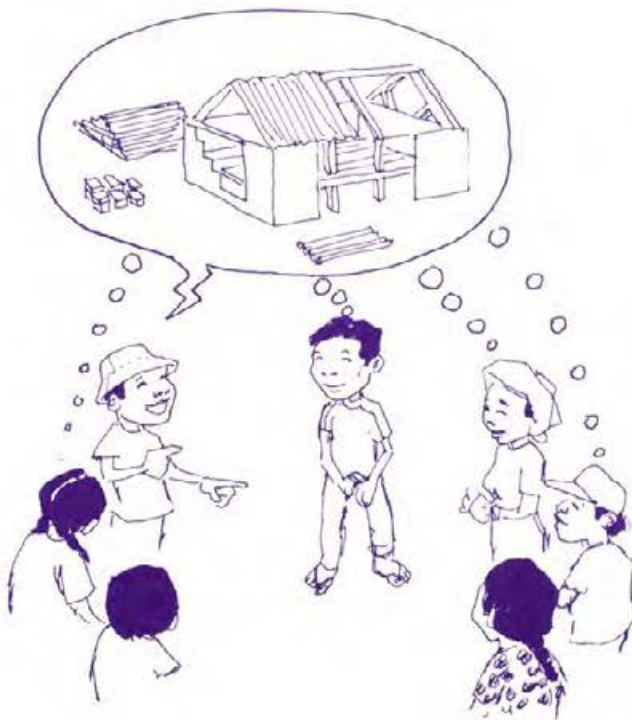
A facilitator can...

◎ summarize what somebody has said when the person is being repetitive, to help focus the persons thinking

◎ help those who speak in broken sentences by slowing them down and drawing them out (probing)

◎ repeat an idea presented by a shy participant in order to bring it to everyone's attention

◎ treat interruptions firmly and respectfully, by assuring the speaker that when the current discussion ends, the facilitator will come back to it.

Conventional versus participatory groups

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> can list the main differences between conventional and participatory groups

> can explain what implications this has for facilitating participatory groups

> can explain how facilitation can ensure the core values of participation

Materials

1. Copied exercise slips for each group
2. Flip-chart with flower representing the four core values of participation
3. Flip-chart representing the four elements of facilitation which support the four core values of participation
4. Copied hand-out

Time

1 hour 30 minutes

Steps

1. Explain to participants that this session will bring out the differences between conventional and participatory groups, which is important if we are to understand what sort of things we should support while facilitating participatory groups.
2. Divide the participants into small groups and distribute a set of slips to each group. Ask them to discuss whether the item written on the slip is a characteristic of a conventional or a participatory group. Paste them in the appropriate column (see hand-out). Allow about 30 minutes.
3. Display the groups outcomes and ask the groups to screen them for differences. Discuss briefly then summarize the characteristics of participatory groups.
4. Ask participants to recall the four core values of participation as they were introduced earlier.
5. Display the flip-chart with these on them and add the petals with the elements of facilitation. These explain what to watch for when facilitating these core values.
6. Close the session by saying that, at this point, these values might still remain quite conceptual or theoretical. Stress that all the skills we will be practicing are based on these core values and that these practices will gradually make these core values become more tangible to you.

Comments

The trick of this session is to build on the session "Values of participatory decision making" (page 38) which introduced the core values of participation. However, only after participants realize how different participatory groups function from conventional ones, will they understand how these core values facilitation can be ensured through facilitation.

Characteristics of participatory and conventional groups

Enlarge, cut into slips and mix up

Everyone participates, not just the ones who speak the loudest.	The fastest thinkers and best speakers get more time to speak.
People give each other room to think and let others speak their thoughts.	People interrupt each other on a regular basis.
Opposing views are allowed within the group.	Differences of opinion are treated as conflicts that must be ignored or 'solved'.
People try to understand each other by asking supporting and exploring questions. "Is this what you mean?"	Questions are often perceived as challenges, as if the person being questioned has done something wrong.
Each member makes the effort to pay attention to the person speaking.	Unless the speaker manages to attract attention, people are not really present.
People are able to listen to each other's ideas because they know their own ideas will also be heard.	People have difficulty listening to each other's ideas because they are busy rehearsing what they want to say.
Each member contributes in discussing controversial issues. Everyone knows everybody's position or opinion.	Some members remain quiet on controversial matters. No one really knows what is everybody's position or opinion.
Members can explain each other's points of view – even when they don't agree with them.	People can rarely explain the opinions and reasoning of those whom they disagree with.
People don't talk behind each other's backs.	Because people don't feel free to speak openly during the meeting, they talk behind each other's back afterwards.
People are encouraged to stand up for their beliefs.	People with different, minority perspectives are commonly discouraged from speaking out.
A problem is not solved until everyone who will be effected by the solution understands the reasoning.	A problem is solved as soon as the fastest thinkers have reached an answer.
When people come to an agreement, the decision reflects a wide range of perspectives.	When people come to an agreement, it is assumed that they are all thinking exactly the same thing.

Characteristics of participatory and conventional groups

The challenges of facilitating participatory groups

Participatory groups	Conventional groups
Everyone participates, not just the ones who speak the loudest.	The fastest thinkers and best speakers get more time to speak.
People give each other room to think and let others speak their thoughts.	People interrupt each other on a regular basis.
Opposing views are allowed within the group.	Differences of opinion are treated as conflicts that must be ignored or 'solved'.
People try to understand each other by asking supporting and exploring questions. "Is this what you mean?"	Questions are often perceived as challenges, as if the person being questioned has done something wrong.
Each member makes the effort to pay attention to the person speaking.	Unless the speaker manages to attract attention, people are not really present.
People are able to listen to each other's ideas because they know their own ideas will also be heard.	People have difficulty listening to each other's ideas because they are busy rehearsing what they want to say.
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Members can explain each other's points of view – even when they don't agree with them.	People can rarely explain the opinions and reasoning of those whom they disagree with.
People don't talk behind each other's backs.	Because people don't feel free to speak openly during the meeting, they talk behind each other's back afterwards.
People are encouraged to stand up for their beliefs.	People with different, minority perspectives are commonly discouraged from speaking out.
A problem is not solved until everyone who will be effected by the solution understands the reasoning.	A problem is solved as soon as the fastest thinkers have reached an answer.
When people come to an agreement, the decision reflects a wide range of perspectives.	When people come to an agreement, it is assumed that they are all thinking exactly the same thing.

Facilitating participatory groups to ensure the core values of participation

Encouraging full participation, overcoming self-censorship

Often people don't say what they are really thinking. Sometimes it's hard to take risks. In most groups the norm is that if you want to speak, do so simply and clearly, and say something familiar enough or interesting enough so the group will listen. Without realizing it most people constantly edit their thinking before they speak.

A facilitator should be aware of this tendency and help people overcome it. S/he should have the skills and temperament to be able to draw people out and let everyone be heard. S/he knows how to make room for quiet members, how to reduce the incidence of premature criticism, and how to keep everyone thinking instead of shutting down.

Promoting mutual understanding and overcoming fixed positions

A group cannot do its best thinking if the members don't understand each other. Most people find it quite difficult to free themselves from their fixed viewpoints. A facilitator helps a group realize that productive groups are built on a foundation of mutual understanding. S/he helps members see that keeping each others viewpoints in mind is invaluable.

Moreover, the facilitator accepts the inevitability of misunderstanding. S/he recognizes that misunderstandings are stressful for everyone involved. The facilitator knows that people in distress need support and need to be treated respectfully. S/he knows it is essential not to take sides, to honor all points of view and to keep listening, so that each and every person feels confident that *someone* understands them.

Fostering inclusive solutions and changing the win-lose mentality

It is hard for people to imagine that stakeholders with clear differences might actually reach an agreement that benefits all parties. Most people are stuck in a conventional mindset for solving problems and resolving conflicts and think that it is either my way or your way.

An experienced facilitator knows how to help a group search for innovative ideas that incorporate everyone's point of view. This can be a challenging task - the facilitator is often the only person who has even considered the possibility that inclusive alternatives may exist. S/he understands the mechanics of building sustainable agreements. When a facilitator introduces a group to the values and methods that foster inclusive solutions, the impact is profound. As the group discovers the strength of this new way of thinking, they often become more hopeful about their groups effectiveness.

Teaching new thinking skills and improving meeting management

Why are most meetings run so poorly? Many people would answer it's my boss, the chairman or the leader. It is likely that neither the leaders nor the members are skilled in participatory processes and collaborative methods.

A facilitator has both the opportunity and a responsibility to teach group members how to design and manage effective sharing, problem solving and/or decision-making processes.

Well-designed procedures for running meetings

Clear explicit procedures are among the most important thinking skills a group can learn. Consider the impact of a badly designed agenda. How can a group be effective when
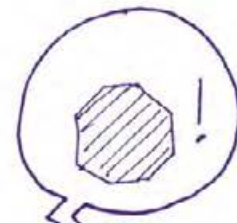
people don't know what they are trying to achieve? A facilitator can teach a range of procedures for running successful meetings.

Structured thinking activities

Sometimes a group needs help focusing on the same thing at the same time. At times like this, a structured thinking activity like brainstorming can be very helpful. Seasoned facilitators develop a repertoire of these types of thinking activities that can be offered to groups at appropriate times.

Clear language to describe group dynamics

When a facilitator supports a group to reflect on its own group dynamics and links this to a theory or a model of group dynamics, s/he provides group members with shared points of reference and a shared language. This enables the group to step back from the *content* of their discussion and talk about the *process*, so they can improve the dynamics of the meeting.

Promoting
mutual understanding:
overcoming fixed
positions

Encouraging
full participation,
overcoming self-
censorship

Mutual
understanding

Full
participation

The core
values of
participatory
decision-
making

Inclusive
solutions

Shared
responsibility

Fostering
inclusive solutions,
changing win-lose
mentality

Teaching
new thinking skills,
improving meeting
management

Role of facilitator

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> can distinguish the difference between the roles of a facilitator, an (old fashioned) extensionist and an expert/lecturer
> can explain the importance of a facilitator being content neutral and process guide

Materials

1. Cards with characteristics for each role to use in the role-play
2. Copied hand-out

Time

2 hours

Steps

1. Introduce the session by saying that we will take a closer look at the role of a facilitator. Explain that the most effective way of exploring this role is through role-playing.

2. Check whether participants are familiar with role-playing and, if not, introduce the activity. Stress that they will be like an actor in a play and cannot be judged for what they are doing as a person, only as an actor. Explain that each group will play a different role and that the other participants will have to guess what type of role is being played.

3. Divide participants into three groups and explain separately to each group what type of role they have to play. Hand over the card that outlines the characteristics of that role. Make sure the participants stick to the role described on the card. Allow ten minutes to prepare and five minutes to present the play.

4. Invite one group to act out their play and encourage the other participants to observe what type of role is being played. Explain that you will stop the play after five minutes by ringing a bell, as the play doesn't need to be finished to understand the role.

5. After the plays are finished ask everybody questions about what they observed such as:
   - What happened?
   - Who participated? Who listened?
   - Who talked? Who made decisions?
   - What do you think the role of the community forester was in this case? Why?

6. If participants cannot guess what role the member of the group was acting out, reveal the role and read out the characteristics mentioned on the card.

7. Continue with the next two plays in the same way.

8. Introduce the matrix of asking versus telling (see hand-out) by drawing then explaining the boxes, labeling only the box of the observer. Ask participants to tell you in which of the remaining boxes they would place the roles of the lecturer, the extensionist and the facilitator.

9. Summarize the discussion by stressing the importance for a facilitator to be content neutral and a guide in the participatory process. Explain that we look at both these aspects of a facilitator in more detail in the coming days.

10. Emphasize that you, as a trainer, do use certain facilitation skills but you cannot be a facilitator role model as you are not content neutral!

11. Distribute the hand-out.

Comments

The purpose of the role-play is not to say that experts or extensionists are not useful. Each of them is useful in a certain context. The point to make is that during participatory decision-making processes in which various stakeholders need to play an active role, the most appropriate role of the community forester is that of a facilitator.

For most participants the concepts of being content neutral and acting as process guide will be relatively new and in some cases even quite shocking. As a trainer you will have to be prepared to meet resistance from participants who don't agree with the idea of being content neutral. For some other participants the resistance will surface at later stages during the training course when they start practicing. However it is important not to avoid these feelings of uneasiness on the side of the participants but to encourage an openness and sharing of feelings and opinions. You can challenge them if necessary.

Lecturer/expert role-play

Your group has ten minutes to prepare a five minute role-play. One of your group will play a lecturer/ expert while the other group members are farmers. The following characteristics of an expert/ lecturer may help you prepare your role-play.

A lecturer/expert is somebody who...
1. has to be an expert and have all the answers
2. comes with a prepared presentation
3. is not interested in the knowledge or background of the farmers
4. focuses on theories
5. is fully in charge of both content and the process
6. does most of the talking
7. only allows questions at certain times.

- Good Luck!

Extensionist role-play guidelines

Extensionist role-play

Your group has ten minutes to prepare a five minute role-play. One member of your group will play a ranger while the other group members will act as farmers. The following characteristics of an extensionist may help you in preparing your role-play.

An extensionist is somebody who...

1. has a new technology/intervention that (s)he has to pass on to farmers
2. highlights the advantages of the new technology/intervention and ignores the disadvantages
3. tries to sell his/her ideas like a salesman
4. is in charge and directs the group
5. allows questions, but answers them in a biased way
6. does not listen well to the problems of the farmers

- Good Luck!

Facilitator role-play guidelines

Facilitator role-play

Your group has ten minutes to prepare a five minute role-play. One member of your group will play the role of a facilitator while the other group members act as farmers. The following characteristics of a facilitator may help you in preparing your role-play.

A facilitator is somebody who...

1. listens most of the time to experiences, inputs and problems of the farmers
2. support farmers to share experiences and learn by themselves
3. is not in charge of the content
4. ensures equal participation and mutual understanding
5. gives information to help the farmers improve their decision-making skills
6. avoids controlling the outcome

- Good Luck!

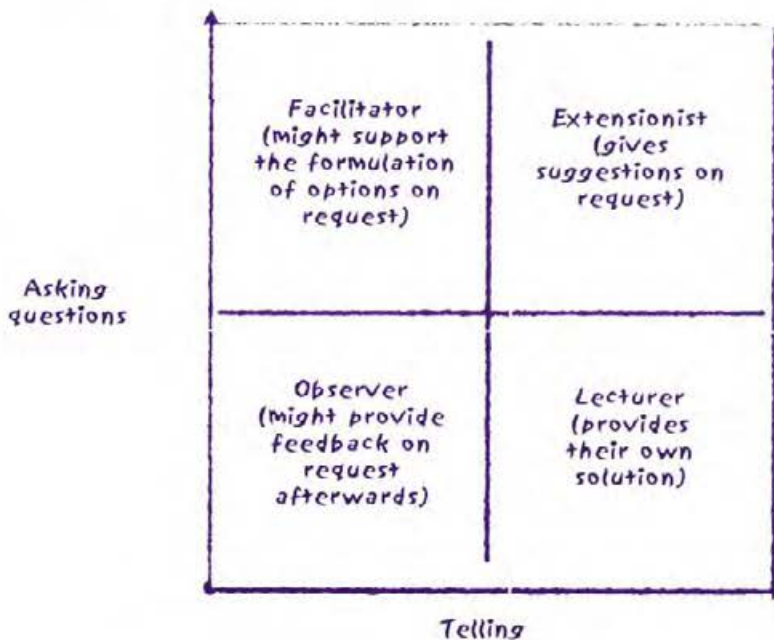# The role of a facilitator in community forestry

The power of a good facilitator

The main characteristic of a good facilitator is that s/he is content neutral. Content neutrality means not taking a position on the issues being discussed and not having a position or stake in the outcome.

The main role of a facilitator is in guiding the process. S/he should try to ensure a fair, inclusive and open process that would balance the participation of everybody and establish a safe space in which all stakeholders can fully participate.

> The power in the role of the facilitator
> is in becoming content neutral
> and a process guide

The following grid illustrates how the role of facilitator can be differentiated from the role of extensionist, lecturer or observer.

	Asking questions	
Facilitator (might support the formulation of options on request)		Extensionist (gives suggestions on request)
Observer (might provide feedback on request afterwards)		Lecturer (provides their own solution)

Telling

The purpose and challenges of being content neutral

@ Why is it important to be content neutral?

If you facilitate you should not give advice, especially if it is not requested. Even if it is requested, it is often not helpful. Advice is telling the group what you think they should or shouldnt do. It comes from the belief that I know better. Advice does not take into account that everyone is different, their experiences are different and therefore the decisions they make will be different.

What are the challenges of being content neutral?

What do you do when you are asked for advice as a facilitator? You could use one of the following responses or redirect the question to the person(s) who asked advice.

- What are the options or alternatives you can think of?
- What do you think the advantages or disadvantages of these options are?
- I suggest you answer that question for yourself first.
- Would you like the group to generate some suggestions?
- Are you asking for my opinion?

The purpose and challenges of being a process guide

Why is the role of process guide important?

Most groups are very content, output or task-oriented because that is why they came together in the first place. However if the task is not routine business, it is often not enough to focus entirely on the content. Most groups are not aware of the importance of the process, they don't know how to guide the process, or they are not in a position to do so. Facilitators, because they are content neutral, are in the position to guide the process. Facilitation is about movement moving a group towards a common destination.

What are the challenges of being a process guide?

Most of the groups you are working with probably know you in a different role or know you have different jobs and therefore different roles in order to perform those jobs. It is therefore important when you are being asked for assistance to:

- clarify expectations of the group regarding your role
- create a common understanding about facilitation in general
- clarify your role as a facilitator.

What about our technical expertise?!

If you cannot share any of your knowledge, what is the point of being a forester, or a sociologist or whatever technical background you might have? It is important to realize that we are not advocating that you can never share your knowledge anymore. If you are asked by a forest user group to demonstrate some tree pruning methods, you can share your knowledge but, in this case, you are not a facilitator!

Introducing the skills of facilitator

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> can explain the wide range of skills a facilitator needs in order to function effectively

> can differentiate between the types of skills needed in order to function effectively as a facilitator

Materials

1. Blank Facilitation Skills House with stairs on flip-chart
2. Copied hand-outs

Time

1 hour and 30 minutes

Steps

1. Introduce the session by explaining that since we have a common understanding about facilitation and the role of the facilitator, we now need to focus on the skills that are required in order to play this facilitation role.

2. Divide participants into three teams. Each team is given a pack of   post-its.

3. Ask each team to reflect on their experiences and identify which skills contribute to good facilitation in community forestry development. Discuss why they are essential. Write all skills on separate posts-it.

4. After the groups have generated a list of skills, ask them to reassemble and introduce the idea of a facilitation house. Firstly, explain the symbolism of the house. Explain that skills can be grouped in three different ways. These are presented by the three floors. Explain the three different types and give an example of each.

5. Distribute a facilitation house hand-out with only the floors labeled to each team and ask them to fill in the steps on each floor using the post-its they wrote their facilitation skills list on. Explain they can also add new post-its.

6. Invite each team to display their house and initiate discussion by looking for similarities and differences. Make sure that some essential skills in each floor are represented and avoid too lengthy discussions as to which floor the skills belong. Initiate discussion by asking:

   @   *Which floor was the easiest to fill in? (probably the attitudes)*

   @   *Which floor was the most difficult to fill in? Why? (probably the group-centered skills as most participants are less aware about their importance)*

7. Distribute the hand-out explaining that the course may not be able to touch upon all skills but we select the ones that we consider most essential and suitable to be practiced in a training room setting.
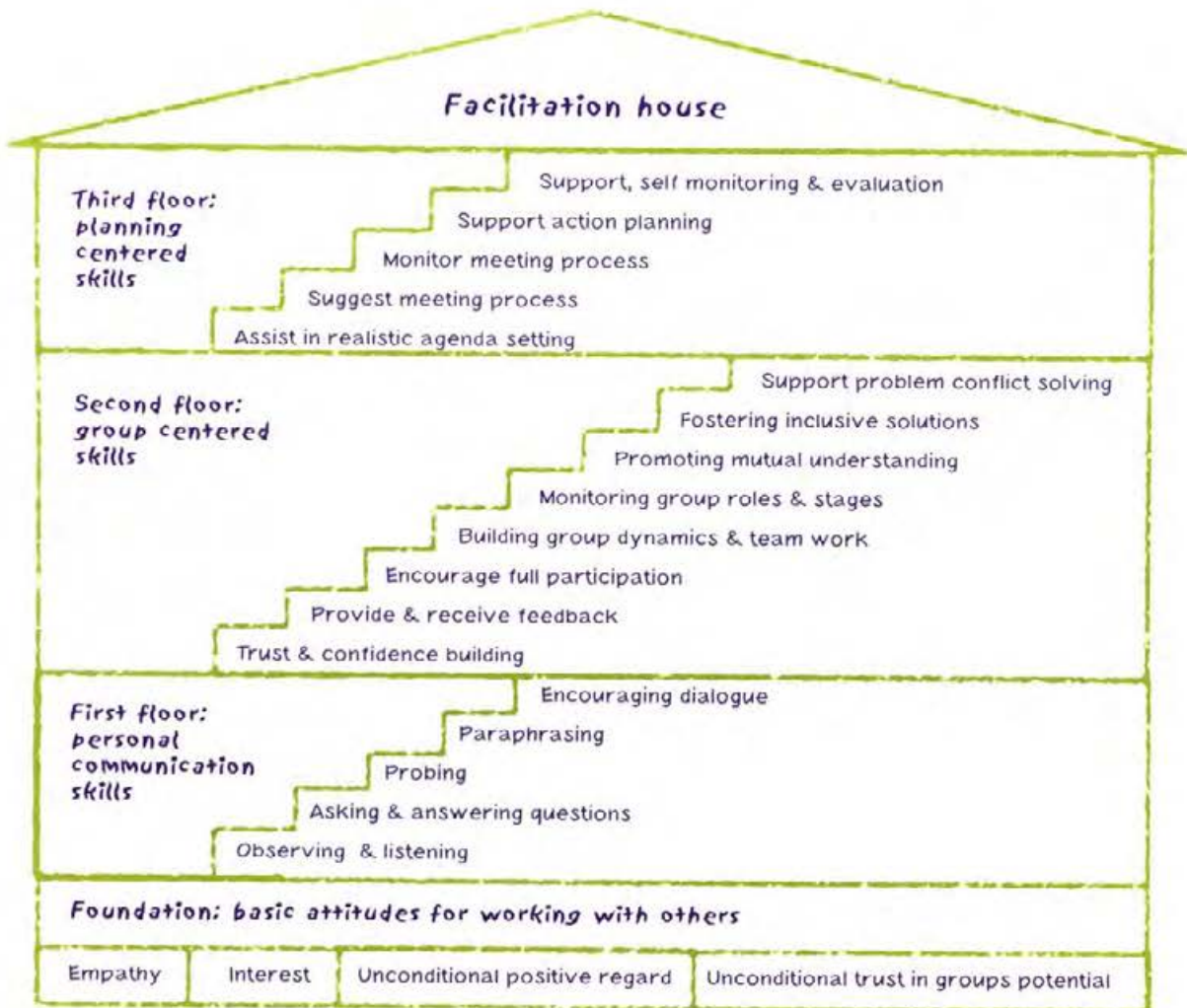
The facilitation house

A facilitator is like the architect and caretaker of a big house with a foundation and three floors. To get from the bottom to the top you have to take one step after the other. The facilitator guides the construction and maintenance of this house assisting the group to build its own house, floor by floor.

S/he is not responsible for the final building, that is the groups task, but s/he will have to have an eye on all floors and the steps so that nothing is forgotten. Each floor requires certain attitudes and skills on the part of the facilitator to enable the group and its members to move around the house in order to operate effectively.

Facilitation house

Third floor: planning centered skills

- Support, self monitoring & evaluation
- Support action planning
- Monitor meeting process
- Suggest meeting process
- Assist in realistic agenda setting

Second floor: group centered skills

- Support problem conflict solving
- Fostering inclusive solutions
- Promoting mutual understanding
- Monitoring group roles & stages
- Building group dynamics & team work
- Encourage full participation
- Provide & receive feedback
- Trust & confidence building

First floor: personal communication skills

- Encouraging dialogue
- Paraphrasing
- Probing
- Asking & answering questions
- Observing & listening

Foundation: basic attitudes for working with others

Empathy	Interest	Unconditional positive regard	Unconditional trust in groups potential

session

Attitude of a facilitator

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> can explain how other people assess our attitudes through our behavior

> have identified the necessary attitudes for community forestry facilitation

> can explain the four critical attitudes needed to be a successful facilitator

> have reflected and identified one or two key weaknesses in personal behavior which they would like to change in the future and have identified opportunities to work on this*

Materials

1. Cards with key attitudes written on them
2. Flip-charts and markers

Time

2 hours

Steps

1. Introduce the objectives and steps of the session. Explain that in this session time will be spent reflecting on the attitudes needed to be an effective field facilitator and to explore the difficulties and processes inherent in developing and changing our own attitudes towards others.

2. Run a short brainstorm on the concept of attitude - what it is and how it is formed.

3. Explain that you will act out one or two types of attitude in front of the group without using words (mime) and ask the participants to guess what attitude you are demonstrating.

4. Divide participants into groups of three. Provide each group with one card. On the card will be written one attitude. These may include open-minded, arrogant, sensitive, lazy etc.

5. Ask the group to prepare a short mime (make sure participants know what a mime is first) where a facilitator can be shown exhibiting this attitude. Explain that the mime should be a maximum of five minutes.

6. Before the mime ask each group to identify who the facilitator will be. After each mime ask the observers to guess the attitude of the facilitator and to identify the key behaviors which indicated this.

7. After the mimes have finished gather participants and ask them:
   - *How did you analyze the attitude of the facilitator?*
   - *What did you observe? What did s/he do? How did s/he do it?*
   - *What did this tell you? How did you interpret this?*

8. Run a quick brainstorm on the attitudes that need to be developed by a field facilitator and those that need to be avoided. (This can also be linked to the foundation of the skills house as seen in the previous session).

9. Explain that even though there are many attitudes desirable for a facilitator to have there are four critical attitudes which will influence your success as a facilitator. Give a short talk on the four attitudes outlined in the hand-out making sure participants understand the differences and importance of each.

10. Summarize the activity by emphasizing that attitude is very closely linked to behavior and others often interpret our attitudes through our behavior (e.g. our tone of voice, our body language, the questions we ask etc.).

Comments

This session is useful in making the conceptual link between attitudes and behavior. Some participants find attitudes rather abstract concepts to think about but this session helps understand them in more concrete ways.

This session should be linked closely with the session on personal feedback to increase participants awareness of how they can develop/change their own attitudes towards others through receiving personal feedback.

* If participants in the training course are colleagues, an optional objective and tool is provided (see personal development sheet) to help participants identify improvements in personal behavior through a combination of self assessment and peer feedback.
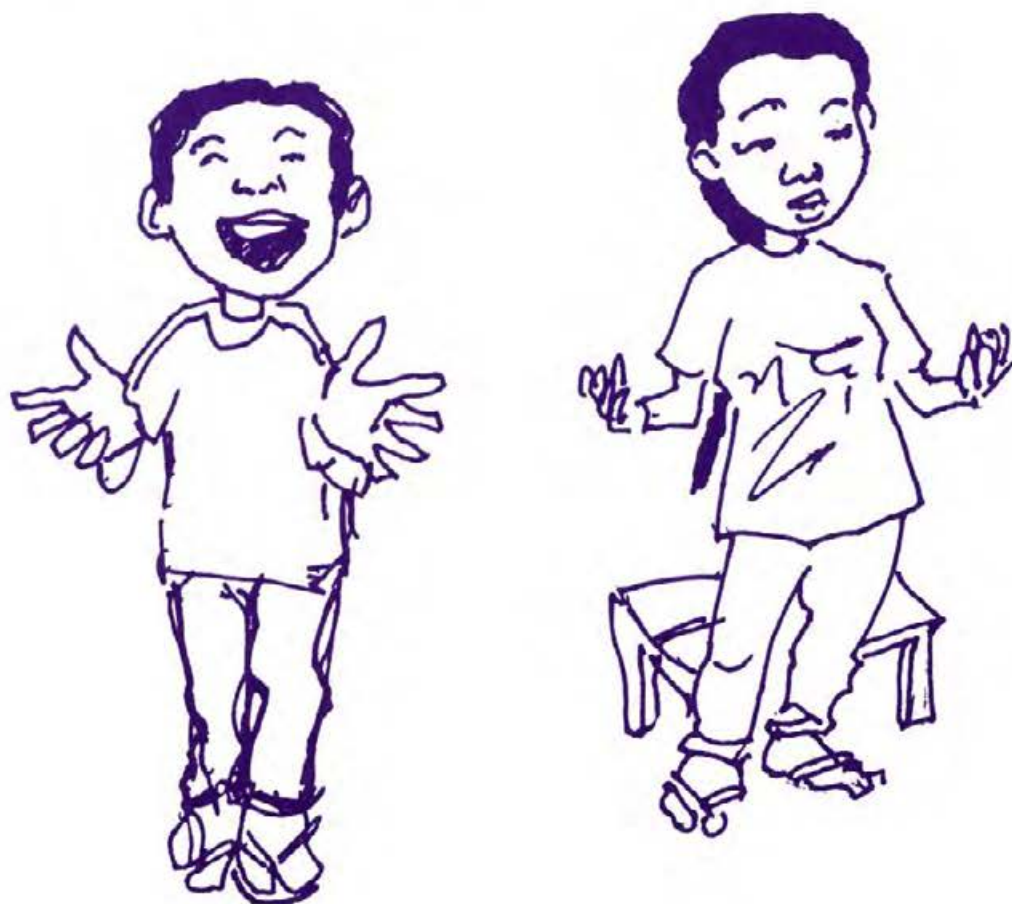
As others see us
personal development sheet

Consider the characteristics below (a combination of attitudes and key behaviors) and put an X in the first column next to the personal characteristics that best describe you as a facilitator. Fold your sheet to cover your responses and exchange your sheet with a peer who works with you as a co-facilitator. Ask them to mark which ones *they* think best reflect you. Discuss any differences and mark those which you feel you need to improve/change for personal growth with the help of your friend.

Personal characteristic	You	Peer	Opportunities for personal growth
Cooperative			
Informed			
Participatory			
Organized			
Trustworthy			
Positive (approach issues constructively)			
Negative (looks for problems not solutions)			
Open			
Honest			
Aggressive			
Assertive			
A natural leader			
Easy to deal with			
Often involved in conflict			
Often resolves conflict			
Sees others perspectives			
Willing to compromise			
Follows through on commitments			
Fun to be with Judges quickly			
Makes others feel confident			
Flexible			
Please add your own...			

Attitude, the foundation of facilitation

How are we perceived by others?

Words 7%

Voice tone 13%

Body language 80%

What is attitude?

Everybody has attitudes. They are a combination of values, beliefs and opinions. Often as human beings we discuss attitudes of others but hate to think about our own.

This is partially because attitude is difficult to measure and more often than not more visible to others than it is to ourselves.

Attitude is expressed in different ways:

> through words and opinions
> through tone of voice
> through body language
> through behavior in a group
> through facial expression

Why are certain attitudes very important if working as a field facilitator?

Certain attitudes are the fundamental basis for being an effective field facilitator. A facilitator will always be in group situations which involves people from a diversity of backgrounds.

If the role of the facilitator is to open up the channels of communication between people in this context s/he must have the following four key attitudes:

◙ *Interest* in peoples situations and lives. Take some time to recall how you might feel when you are telling a story and the person you are telling it to is not interested. You are unlikely to want to meet and cooperate with them in the future unless pressured to do so and you certainly are not likely to repeat the same story. People will feel more confident sharing their thoughts with you if they feel you are interested in their lives and not just those aspects that relate to your profession.

◙ *Empathy* is being able to put yourself in someone elses situation in order to understand their perspective on an issue. Empathy is essential when working with communities in order to understand peoples diversity of conditions, situations and interests. This can often be hard as we have to break free of our own assumptions and perceptions of people and try hard to put ourselves in their position. The challenge of group facilitation and working in a community is that you need to empathize with many people at the same time! However if you can develop this attitude you will find that people will trust you much more and will therefore be more responsive. The challenge is to empathize but stay neutral at the same time.

◙ *Unconditional positive regard* means, briefly, that no matter what a persons views, opinions, behavior, gender, or class etc. you must always value the humanity and uniqueness of an individual and respect their potential. You need to accept people the way they are if you are going to work with them as their facilitator. This does not mean you need to like them or agree with them. As you can imagine, this is a difficult aspiration given that so many of the people we meet irritate us to say the least! But it is also vital to realize that if you are unable to honor and respect even difficult people, you cannot facilitate them.

🄰 *Unconditional trust in a groups potential* - the underlying belief here is that being content neutral lies in unconditional trust of a groups potential to find a workable solution or decision for their own problems. This means that no matter what the group composition is like, you believe that the answers lie within the group and that your role as a facilitator is to help and bring these answers out.

Of course numerous other positive attitudes are an advantage too. However, these four are the essential ones. No matter how good your skills are as a facilitator or your technical skills are as a forester, if your attitudes are not supportive in the ways mentioned above, you will have difficulties.

How can we work on our attitudes?

Unfortunately, there are many aspects of ourselves we cannot see but others see better! However, there are also aspects of ourselves which we simply often ignore but know are there. Try to use opportunities for your own personal development.

Tips for a self aware facilitator

- ◎ Do not judge
- ◎ Try hard not to project your own perceptions onto others
- ◎ Do not assume that people need your help
- ◎ Be genuinely friendly
- ◎ Show respect, and honor the people you work with
- ◎ Have faith in the people you work with
- ◎ Accept that people have their own values, behaviors and worldviews
- ◎ Show interest in all aspects of peoples lives
- ◎ Step back and listen
- ◎ Behave in the same way you would expect others to behave toward you
- ◎ Don't think you know better
- ◎ Don't give advice
- ◎ Please add your own...

5. Core roles of a facilitator
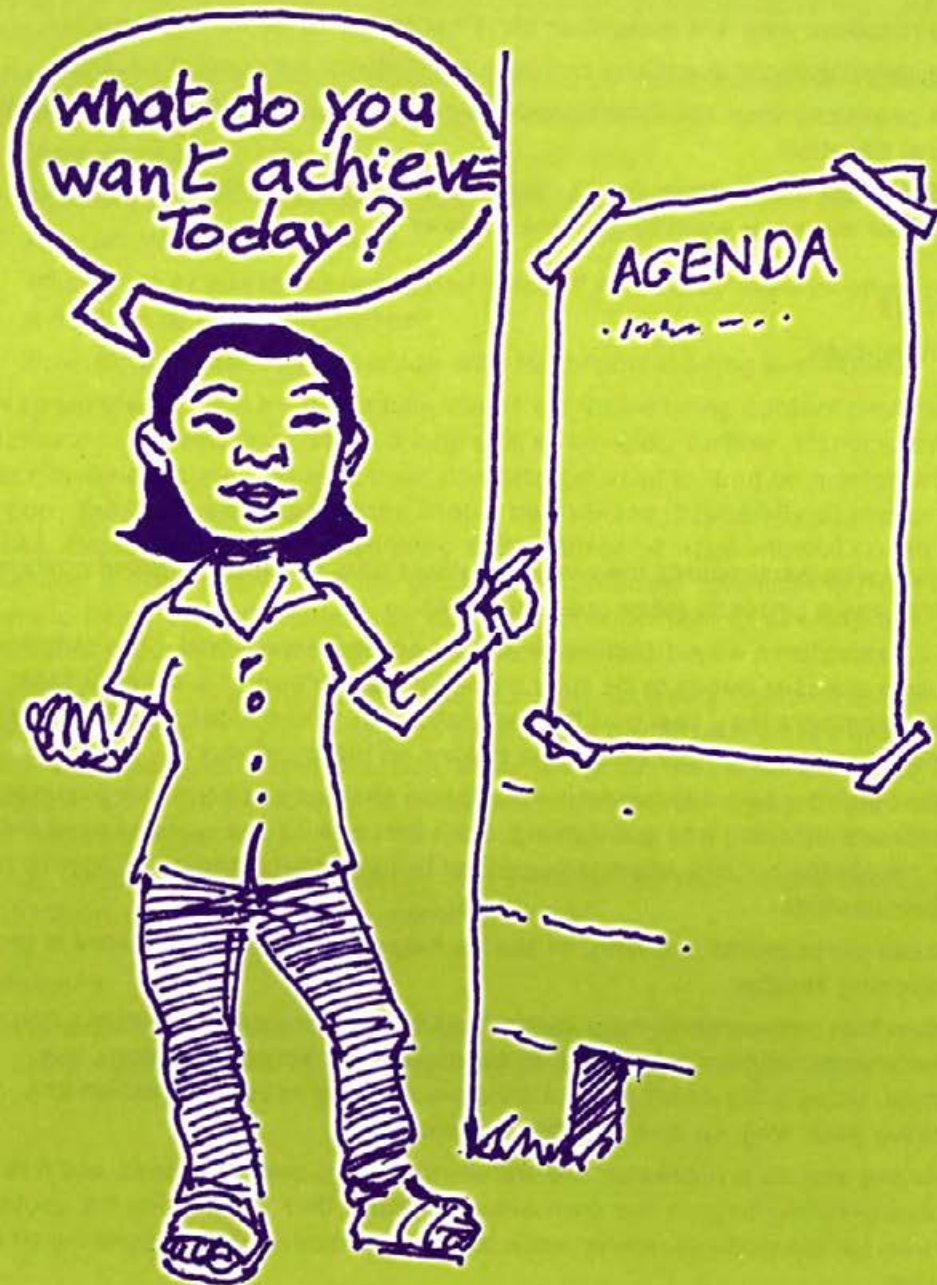
- ◎ Practicing being content neutral
- ◎ Practicing being a group process guide
- ◎ Making your meeting more effective
- ◎ Designing meetings

Practicing being content neutral

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> have recalled why it is important for a facilitator to be content neutral

> have identified how questions can help a facilitator be content neutral

> have practiced their facilitator's skills by listening and questioning in a content neutral situation

> can list some alternatives for facilitators if the group is stuck and the facilitator does not want to give the answer

Materials

Copied hand-outs

Time

2 hours

Steps

1. Review with participants the two core roles of a facilitator - being content neutral and a process guide (see page 84).

2. Run a brainstorm why a facilitator should be content neutral. (The outcome of group processes needs to be fully owned by the group. If a solution fails, group members may feel that the facilitator has taken sides with some group members, or may simply blame the failure on the facilitator.)

3. Explain that the two fundamental facilitation skills needed for being content neutral are listening and questioning. Both these skills are needed at all times by a facilitator but are especially critical to our understanding of how to be content neutral.

4. Refresh participants' memory of the six helper questions introduced in the questioning session.

5. Explain that one model to help understand how open-ended questions can help in remaining content neutral is to sequence the six helper questions in a triangle. Using a flip-chart draw a triangle, starting at the foundation and working your way up and around (see hand-out).

6. Draw out that as a facilitator we will always have our own ideas and it is always tempting to give our own answer rather than supporting the group to answer for themselves. Refer back to the brainstorm at the beginning of the session.

7. Explain how you can build up a probing process through the triangle of questions which can help a group/individual analyze a problem for themselves.

8. Distribute the hand-out and ask the group to split into pairs or trios. Ask participants to think of a simple problem that they have pestering them in their minds at the moment e.g. can't give up smoking, problematic boss etc.

9. Explain that they are to share this problem with their partner and that their partner, using the triangle model, is to ask questions to help you solve that

problem for yourself. Under no circumstances is the questioner allowed to suggest his/her own ideas to solve the problem (be aware that participants will try to ask leading questions with their own ideas in the question e.g. *"have you ever tried......?"*)

10. After each person has had an opportunity to do some questioning and also be questioned, bring the group back together again.

   ◎ *What happened? Was it easy or difficult? Why?*

   ◎ *What did you do if you found your own ideas creeping into the question?*

   ◎ *How did you use the model?*

   ◎ *What type of questions were you asking? Were they always open-ended or a mixture of open and closed?*

   ◎ *How did you feel as the person with the problem being questioned?*

11. Wrap-up the session by explaining that if we value being content neutral as facilitators questioning can be a key skill to develop further. Participants must bear in mind though that questions can also be used to lead or manipulate a group. These types of questions should be avoided, especially at inappropriate times. Explain that good questioning skills cannot be used without constructive listening. If there is time ask the group to recall some listening barriers and link them to being content neutral. Stress that it is important to develop and practice both skills if you want to stay content neutral as a facilitator.

12. Post the list of 'frequently asked questions' about being content neutral and ask participants to form groups to think about the answers (see hand-out). Give one small group one question. After the group has discussed it, fill in their suggestions in the blank column on the chart. Refer the group to the hand-out for further suggestions.

13. Wrap up the session by explaining that there will be many more chances to reflect on, and practice being, content neutral.

Comments

As this is quite an advanced session make sure your participants are familiar with basic skills such as effective listening, questioning and probing prior to this session.

Using questioning to be content neutral

Your mindset won't help them!

One of the big mistakes facilitators make is that they impose their ideas on the group as they search for an answer to a particular problem. This is often because the facilitator has greater experience than the others in the group and perhaps has seen the specific situation many times in the past. The temptation is always there to try to get the group to see it your way.

BLA BLA, BLA BLA
BLA BLA, ET,ETC...

In this case the group misses out on the opportunity to discover their own way to the solution. They also lose the opportunity to discover a better way than that which is possible using the facilitator's frame of reference.

Facilitators must recognize that in many instances working with mature experienced people requires that we put our own mind set to the side in order to remain neutral to help others.

How can a facilitator's questioning help groups analyze problems for themselves?

So if we should not give our answer to a groups problem as a facilitator how can we help the group? A good starting point is to use some questions to further define the problem for the group and then gradually encourage the group to start analyzing the problem.

A combination of open-ended questions in a sequence illustrated by the questioning skills model can help. Make sure when you ask questions that you are not putting your own ideas into the question. Examples of this are...
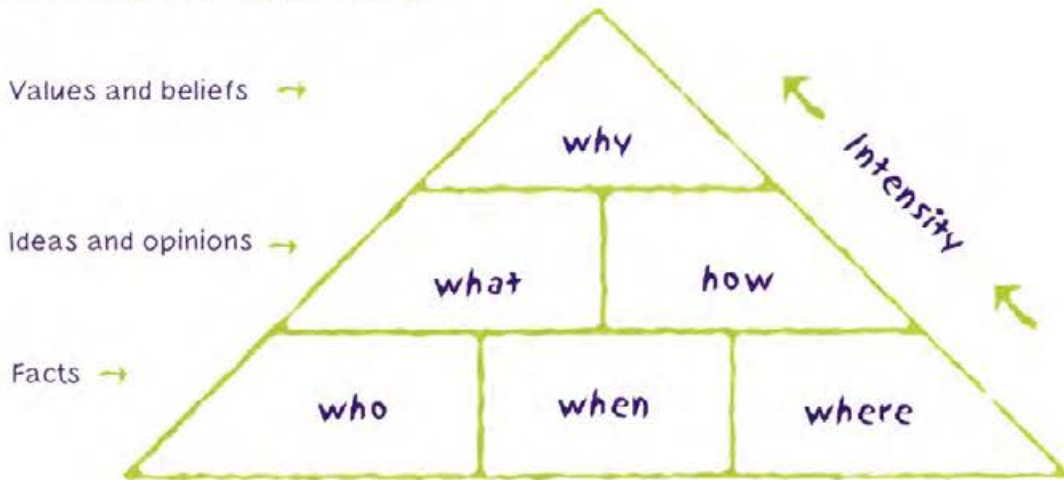
Have you ever tried...........?

Fertilizer is a good solution. What do you think?

Why is it important to remain content neutral as a facilitator?
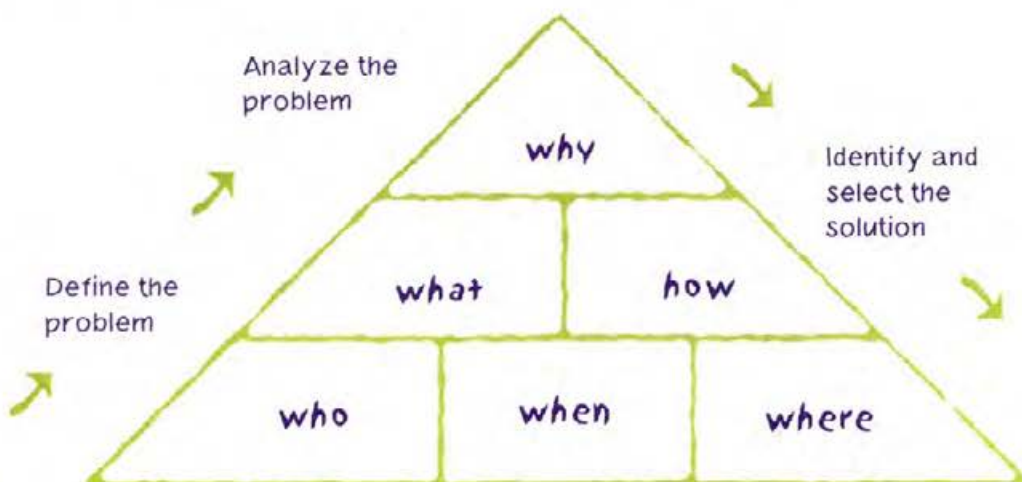
- ▣ If it was "just the facilitator's idea" then there would be no group ownership of the solution
- ▣ Constrains the creative thinking process of the group
- ▣ May be perceived by some in the group as favoring one type of idea and taking sides
- ▣ Will interfere with the sustainable agreement process
- ▣ If the solution is not successful the facilitator will get the blame

A model for questioning

Values and beliefs →

Ideas and opinions →

Facts →

```
                    why
              what        how
          who      when       where
```

Intensity ↖ ↖

The six helper questions can be looked at in different way as shown in the model above. Helper questions can help you find out all kinds of information and promote mutual understanding between group members in different ways. The "why" question is the question which can be the most intense as it is probing our values and beliefs which can be very personal. Although it is very important for group members to understand each others' values and beliefs, sometimes the question "why" can be interpreted as aggressive or defensive. As a facilitator you should be conscious as to when and how you are using the question "why". You can still encourage the sharing of beliefs by building up the picture using the questioning model. For example instead of asking "why" straight away you could ask - What led you to think that way? or How did you come to that conclusion?

Using the questioning model in problem analysis

Analyze the problem

```
                    why
              what        how
          who      when       where
```

Define the problem

Identify and select the solution

Frequently asked questions on being content neutral

Question	Suggestion
What if the group can't answer my questions?	◎ Check they understand the question and try asking in different ways. Often questions remain unanswered because they are badly phrased or unclear. Reframe your questions in as many ways as possible.
	◎ Try to find ways in which providing the answers can be fun/less sensitive.
	◎ Observe group dynamics - dividing people up into smaller groups may help.
	◎ Above all, ask yourself what is the underlying reason why they won't/can't answer your questions!
What if the group gets frustrated, keeps asking me questions and then asks me for the answer as I am the "technical expert"?	◎ Many group members, especially in village situations, are used to experts providing them with the answer. They may also just be surprised to be asked questions and you may need to explain your role more carefully. It's a change for them!
	◎ Get the group to list all the options let them know you want to hear all their ideas. Often the craziest ideas make the best solutions.
	◎ Persevere with the process. When the group realizes that they have the potential to find their own answers they won't be so critical next time!
If I have an idea which I have seen working in another group situation can I introduce it?	◎ Don't introduce your ideas till you are sure that the group have exhausted their own.
	◎ Introduce your idea as an option and present all the advantages and importantly the disadvantages. Encourage the group to analyze your idea in the same way as all the others.
	◎ Find an innovative way to introduce the idea e.g. through a visit, or an exchange of experience with other groups who tried the same thing. Make sure they don't assume that just because they see you as the expert that your answer is the only one.

I am a "technical expert" too! How and when can I use my technical knowledge as a facilitator?	◉ Your technical knowledge provides a critical background for guiding the group process.
	◉ You can help provide the group with lists of ideas and options from others' experiences and then support them in the process of analysis.
	◉ Your technical knowledge can help you to know when a group needs to analyze a problem further. You may have the knowledge to help lead them through that process.
If they ask me for advice can I give it?	◉ You can suggest other options if you are sure that you have encouraged them in all ways possible to think for themselves.
	◉ It should never be advice but a list of options they can explore further. You should provide them with other contacts and resources as well.
	◉ Remember it is easy to give advice but it is NOT easy to facilitate a group and help them analyze problems and find solutions for themselves.

Add your own...

Practicing being a group process guide

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> have recalled why it is important for a facilitator to be a process guide
> have identified how observing people's behavior and group processes can help a facilitator to be a process guide
> can distinguish three types of behaviours in groups
> have practiced observing people's behavior and group dynamics
> can mention the different stages of the group process

Materials

1. 400 balls in four different colors and numbered (The type of ball does not really matter. It can be anything between the size of a ping-pong ball to a tennis ball)
2. Big container for the balls
3. Copied observation sheet
4. Copied hand-out

Time

1 hour 30 minutes

Steps

1. Start the session by asking participants to recall what it means to be a process guide, reviewing the learning points from the session "The role of the facilitator" (page 78).
2. Introduce the different aspects of being a process guide. One aspect is designing the meeting process and the other is supporting the group process. Explain that this session will deal the last one (there are two other session that deal with designing the meeting process on pages 110 and 117).
3. Explain that to be able to guide both people's behavior and the group process we first need to have a better understanding about both aspects. Tell participants that in this session some ideas will be introduced that will form the basis for later work when they will be practicing observing people's behavior and group dynamics.
4. Run a brainstorm about the things we can observe as a facilitator which helps us understand group dynamics. Introduce briefly the three sets of predictable group behaviours (see hand-out) to the group in a participatory way.
5. Ask one third of the participants to volunteer as observers. Hand them the observation sheet. Explain the task by telling them that they have 15 minutes to order the balls by color and number.
6. Start the assignment. Do not make notes on behavior or the group process yourself.

7. Stop the assignment after exactly 15 minutes. Ask the group to sit down and de-role. Stress that we will not criticize individual group behavior but look at the group as a whole.

8. Support participants to reflect on the exercise by asking the following questions to the observers:

   ◎ *What happened? Who did what?*

   ◎ *How were roles and responsibilities divided?*

   ◎ *Did any type of behaviors dominate, task, group or self or were they balanced? Did this change overtime?*

   ◎ *Do you think a facilitator could have helped the group to be more effective in achieving its task? How?*

   ◎ *How can being aware of these types of behavior in a group help you become a better process guide?*

9. Explain that apart from group behaviors there is another aspect about groups worth monitoring as a facilitator. This is the stages any group experiences. Introduce the group stages one by one. You can ask participants to reflect on the process they went through themselves as a group during the training course.

10. Summarize the main learning points and distribute the hand-out.

Practicing observing people's behavior and group dynamics

exercise

Observation Sheet:

Task-oriented behaviors

	By whom	Examples
Initiating		
Information or opinion-seeking		
Information or opinion-giving		
Clarifying and elaborating		
Summarizing		
Consensus-seeking		

Group-building behaviors

	By whom	Examples
Encouraging		
Expressing group feelings		
Harmonizing		
Compromising		
Gate-keeping		

Self-oriented behaviors

	By whom	Examples
Blocking		
Deserting		
Bulldozing		
Recognition-seeking		

Observing group behavior and processes:

Fundamental skills for being a process guide

🔲 What is observing when facilitating?

Observing is the ability to:

◎ see what is happening without judging it

◎ interpret the non-verbal clues of both individuals and the group, objectively

Why bother?

Often people express a message verbally but convey something different non verbally. This is because people are better at controlling what they say than how they behave. This gives you, as the facilitator, the opportunity to cross-check what somebody actually thinks or believes from the way that person behaves or interacts. Non verbal communication can convey strong messages.

Tips - when using your observation skills:

🔲 Never assume that your interpretation of body language is right. Check with the group (member) directly or indirectly.

🔲 Cross-check the messages that people express verbally with their non-verbal behavior.

🔲 Respond to low energy levels when you see the energy of the group has dropped.

🔲 Find ways to help the group the verbalize how they are feeling if you observe that the process in the group is not running smoothly.

Good observation will help you to objectively:
@ assess the feelings and attitudes of individuals
@ monitor group dynamics, processes and participation
Therefore, it is very important as a facilitator to develop skills for observing this type of non-spoken communication. You will need to do this quickly, and without anybody really noticing it.

What sort of things can you observe?
Within a group people interact in different ways, not only because of what is being said but also how it is said. As a facilitator we should observe the following.

On an individual level:
@ use of the voice: whispering, shouting
@ style of communication: statements, questions
@ facial expressions: yawning, smiling
@ eye-contact: searching or avoiding
@ gestures: types of movements with arms and legs
@ posture: how people sit or stand

On a group level:
@ who says what?
@ who does what?
@ who looks at who when talking?
@ who avoids eye contact with whom?
@ who sits beside whom?
@ is it always like this?
@ who avoids whom?
@ what is the general level of energy?
@ what is the overall level of interest?
@ etc.

> **Supporting group behaviors**
>
> As your group becomes more experienced, you will find that behavior is increasingly focused on task and group-building functions.
>
> You can support this by helping the group reflect on the group process, giving feedback, and by encouraging individuals to monitor their own behavior.

How can observing group behavior and processes help you become a process guide?
When working in groups, people tend to behave in predictable patterns. As groups work together, they pass through successive stages of formal and informal relationships. Attention to both aspects is crucial when facilitating groups.

Predictable group behaviors
When working in groups, people tend to behave in one of three patterns:
@ one type of behavior helps the group to fulfill its task
@ another serves to create cooperation and support and
@ the third is focused on individual needs

Task-oriented behaviors

Initiating	Propose tasks or goals, define group problems, suggest a procedure or idea	"A good place for us to start would be to agree exactly what the problem is" "I suggest we go around the group and find out what experience each of us has had with a similar problem"
Information or opinion-seeking	Request facts, ask for suggestions or ideas.	"Bunna, you deal with this problem all the time, what do you think we should do next?" "Pam, you have experience in this — what would you suggest?"
Information or opinion-giving	Offer facts, state beliefs, give suggestions, or ideas.	"There are two ways open to us..." Shall we do a short brainstorming session to get our ideas on paper?"
Clarifying and elaborating	Interpret or restate ideas and suggestions, clear up confusion, indicate alternatives before the group, give examples.	"So you are proposing that we present this agreement to the voters of the referendum. Is that right?" "That's one way of going about it. What about this alternative..."
Summarizing	Pull together related ideas, restate suggestions after the group has discussed them, offer a decision for the group to accept or reject.	"Let's just have a look at the ideas on the flip-chart. It seems to me that two are possible to achieve, but that the rest need further exploration." "We now have to decide which decision to take. Is it A or B?"
Consensus-seeking	Check with the group to see whether agreement has been reached, or if it can possibly be reached.	"In spite of our differences, we seem to all agree on one thing... Is that correct?" "What would it take for each of us to agree on ...?"

Group-building behaviors

Encouraging	Be responsive to others, accept the contributions of others, give others an opportunity for recognition.	"Interesting question!" "That issue is worth exploring" "The sub-committee gave us clear choices."

Group-building behaviors (cont.)

Expressing group feeling	Sense feelings, moods, and relationships within the group and share personal feelings with others.	"It seems we are overwhelmed with the amount of ideas." "I like the way we are working as a team."
Harmonizing	Attempt to mediate differences and reduce tensions by giving people a chance to explore their differences.	"This has always been a controversial issue. What is it, I wonder, that both sides have in common?"
Compromising	Offer a compromise, admit an error, discipline yourself to keep the group together even when your idea or status is involved in a conflict.	"You are right. I have been stubborn on that point, I am prepared to..." "That was my mistake. How about we ..."
Gate-keeping	Keep the channels of communication open and make it easy for other to participate.	"Lin, we haven't heard from you in a while. What do you think about..."? "I have been doing most of the talking. I'd really like to hear what each of you think about it."

Self-oriented behaviors

Blocking	Interfering with the process by rejecting ideas, taking a negative stand on all suggestions, arguing, being pessimistic, refusing to cooperate.	"That will never work!" "If that is decided I won't be part of it."
Deserting	Withdrawing in some way, being indifferent, being too formal, daydreaming, whispering to others, wandering of the subject.	"I don't care." "Whatever you decide."
Bulldozing	Struggling for status, boasting, criticizing, deflating the ego or status of others.	"How can you claim that, you don't have any experience in this!"
Recognition-seeking	Attempting to get attention by boasting, or claiming a lot of experience or great accomplishments.	"Based on my past experiences I can assure you that this is the best solution!"

◙ Stages of team life

It takes time for a group to develop into a team. There are different ways in which this can happen. One model that can help you, as a facilitator, support team building is as follows:

	Group stage	Facilitator's role
Forming	This is the coming together stage. Members may not have chosen to join the team but have been appointed. Feelings of uncertainty and anxiety may arise. Will I fit in? Will others see me as good for the group?	Make people feel comfortable with each other. Provide time to get to know each other and use icebreakers.
Informing	This is the explanation stage when members are made aware of the purpose and goals of the task. Members interact because they recognize that they are looking towards the same goal.	Help the group to find common ground and develop its vision, mission and purpose. Provide introductory exercises, and a clear agenda.
Storming	This is the structuring stage where members start to adopt roles. This is a key stage that may involve experimentation, jostling, game playing and even conflict. Power struggles may take place. Personality clashes may occur and there may be rebellion against the leader.	Provide support to the group. Develop and use skills, and refine and remind participants of the purpose of the course and group norms. Encourage openness and resolve conflicts.
Norming	This is the stabilizing stage where rules, rituals and procedures are decided and accepted. Role identities are agreed upon and togetherness develops. The way forward is agreed upon.	Help re-tune the process. Redefine norms if necessary, and put responsibilities back to the group.
Performing	This is the achieving stage; the "getting on with the task" stage. The team becomes a working group, with interlocking roles, specialization's and a division of labor. Through cooperation and participation the team works towards achieving its goals.	Monitoring and occasional reviews are important. Let the group get on with the tasks. Introduce tools and techniques only if asked by group.
Transforming	The team is dynamic, not static, because development and change takes place, both within the team and the individual members.	
Mourning	This is the ending stage. The task is completed, the original purpose for being a team has ended and the life of the team is officially finished. Period of regret and moving away and onwards.	Prepare participants for the transition away from group. Ensure farewells are said – as individuals and group members. Use some final feedback techniques.

Making your meeting more effective

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> have identified the characteristics of a bad meeting agenda and process

> can explain the critical components of designing a meeting process and its agenda

> have differentiated between topics and outcomes in relation to a meeting agenda

Materials

1. Envelopes with slips containing the characteristics of effective and ineffective meetings
2. Glue sticks and flip-charts
3. Meeting questionnaire and action plan
4. Copied hand-out

Time

1 hour and 30 minutes

Steps

1. Introduce this session by explaining that we will focus on another key role of a facilitator, that of *process guide*. Explain that there are two aspects to this process. One aspect relates to guiding and building group dynamics (covered in the former session) and the other to the design of the meeting and the guiding of the meeting process. This session will focus on the latter.

2. Explain that we will do an exercise in which participants have to relate back to their own experience with meetings (with or without a facilitator) and reflect on what sorts of things made them effective or ineffective. Divide the group into smaller groups. Distribute the envelopes with slips containing the characteristics of effective and ineffective meetings. Ask participants to think about which characteristics make meetings effective and which make them ineffective, then paste them in the appropriate columns.

3. Ask the groups to put up their charts then invite them to walk around and look at what other participants have done, observing the differences.

4. Explain that the rest of the session will focus on how to design processes and realistic agendas for meetings incorporating the effective characteristics just raised in the previous exercise.

5. Ask participants what an agenda is and why we develop them (e.g. to focus the meeting, to know the time allocation, to know what decisions need to be taken etc.). Ask participants if they have ever developed agendas for meetings they have had with farmers? Emphasize that planning, or contributing to, an agenda is a central responsibility of a facilitator and will help improve the effectiveness of meetings even for field workers.

6. Introduce the idea that there are two critical components in good agenda planning (see hand-out). Explain that many facilitators and many meetings distribute or share agendas with just a list of topics. This often leads to confusion in meetings as delegates or farmers do not know what they are expected to achieve.

7. Ask the group to focus on the first critical component of an agenda - clarifying the desired outcome for each topic. Give an example (see hand-out).

8. Ask participants to form smaller buzz groups and get them to imagine they have a topic on their meeting agenda called "forest management". Ask them to brainstorm at least three possible desired outcomes for this topic. When each group has at least three ideas, ask each group to share one by writing it on the white board. Discuss the range of examples, making sure that participants understand the difference between an objective, a sub-topic, and a specific, outcome*.

9. Get the group to reflect on the exercise by asking them what they think about formulating outcomes instead of just topics. Ask them what this means when we develop agendas? Stress the importance of differentiating topics and outcomes as a facilitator, as it will help the group *and* the facilitator know what is expected at the end of the meeting. It also gives a facilitator the opportunity to design a realistic process with the group, in order to achieve the expected outcomes.

10. To wrap-up the session distribute the questionnaire and let participants fill it in either now or for homework. This activity is optional. Ask them to calculate their scores and identify action points.

11. Distribute the hand-out.

Comments

* Be aware that participants will often generate objectives or sub-topics rather than specific outcomes as this is what they are used to doing. Also make sure the outcomes formulated are realistic enough and specific to the meeting and not the overall project.

This session is closely related to the next one which deals with the actual process design.

Characteristics of effective and ineffective meetings

(enlarge, cut into slips and mix up)

Effective meetings	Ineffective meetings
A variety of different methods are used to allow everyone to participate	An agenda with detailed time allocation is prepared. It is assumed the meeting will start on time
If the agenda is overcrowded with items, prioritize and select the most urgent, desired outcomes	No prepared agenda as the facilitator thinks it is important to maintain flexibility
A participant of the meeting is delegated to make notes and share them with other participants at the end of the meeting	The meeting has an agenda with a list of topics but no desired outcomes
A person is nominated to keep a check on time	It is assumed from the beginning of the meeting that everybody knows what needs to be done in the meeting but actually......
Participants are well prepared for the meeting	No breaks given as the meeting topics require concentration and focus
Participants know well in advance what will be expected of them in the meeting	No opportunities given to raise issues that are not on the agenda
Ground rules for the meeting are developed, shared and agreed by everybody	A lot of time is spent prioritizing items to be discussed in the meeting
Everybody is clear at the end of the meeting as to what has been decided and what is to be done next	Meetings always follow the same format and the same people always speak
Issues raised that are not on the agenda are parked. A suitable time to address them will be discussed at the end of the meeting	At the end of the meeting decisions and future actions are unclear
All participants know each other and understand the different roles in the meeting process	Confusion about responsibility arises between the chairman, facilitator, minute-taker and participants
At the beginning of the meeting the group sets benchmarks in terms of timing and agenda points	Meetings are always a stream of presentations from different individuals. Discussion time is always short
Any other:	Any other:

How well do you design and facilitate meetings?

	Almost never	Rarely	Some-times	Usually	Almost always
Do you design the process and prepare an agenda for meetings in advance?	1	2	3	4	5
Are all participants clear about the expected outcomes of the meeting before the meeting starts?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you establish ground rules for your meetings?	1	2	3	4	5
Do your agendas and process allow for other emerging issues which may not have been anticipated originally?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you use a selection of different methods in your meetings?	1	2	3	4	5
Do your meetings start and end on time?	1	2	3	4	5
Does everyone participate in your meetings?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you avoid applying detailed timing to your agendas?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you allow participants to have breaks when they need them in your meetings?	1	2	3	4	5
Is everybody clear about what decisions have been made and what actions need to be taken in your meetings?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you make sure someone is taking notes and that notes are shared after the meetings?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you always make sure that the difference between your role as a facilitator and others, such as a possible chairperson, is clearly understood?	1	2	3	4	5

Improving your meetings: scoring your questionnaire!

Total your scores for the numbers you circled:

> If you scored between 50-60 well done! Your meetings already have the major ingredients for success.

> If you scored between 40-50 don't be too concerned but try to focus on the areas which need improvement.

> If you scored below 30 there are obviously areas which would benefit from some extra work. However, don't despair, as there are likely to be several areas which you can improve quite quickly.

As a facilitator you can always improve. Use the action plan format to identify which aspects of process design and meeting facilitation you want to improve and when it will be your first opportunity to try!

Action plan for you!

What aspect would you like to improve?	When is your first opportunity?	Who can help you?

Improving the effectiveness of your meetings

The role of facilitator in process design

As part of your role as a process guide (as a facilitator) it is essential that you are equipped to design processes and help plan agendas for meetings and other events. You are ultimately responsible for helping others identify what they hope to achieve in their meetings and helping them to reach that outcome. Often planning for the meeting is just as important as the meeting itself. If you are not the only one responsible for reaching an outcome then it is crucial you consult with the others before the meeting.

What is an agenda and why do we have them?

Agendas are a familiar tool often wrongly used in meetings, and sometimes not at all. Agendas are often associated with formal office meetings, and field workers rarely use them. A good agenda can be seen as an effective facilitation and planning tool and can help a field worker too.
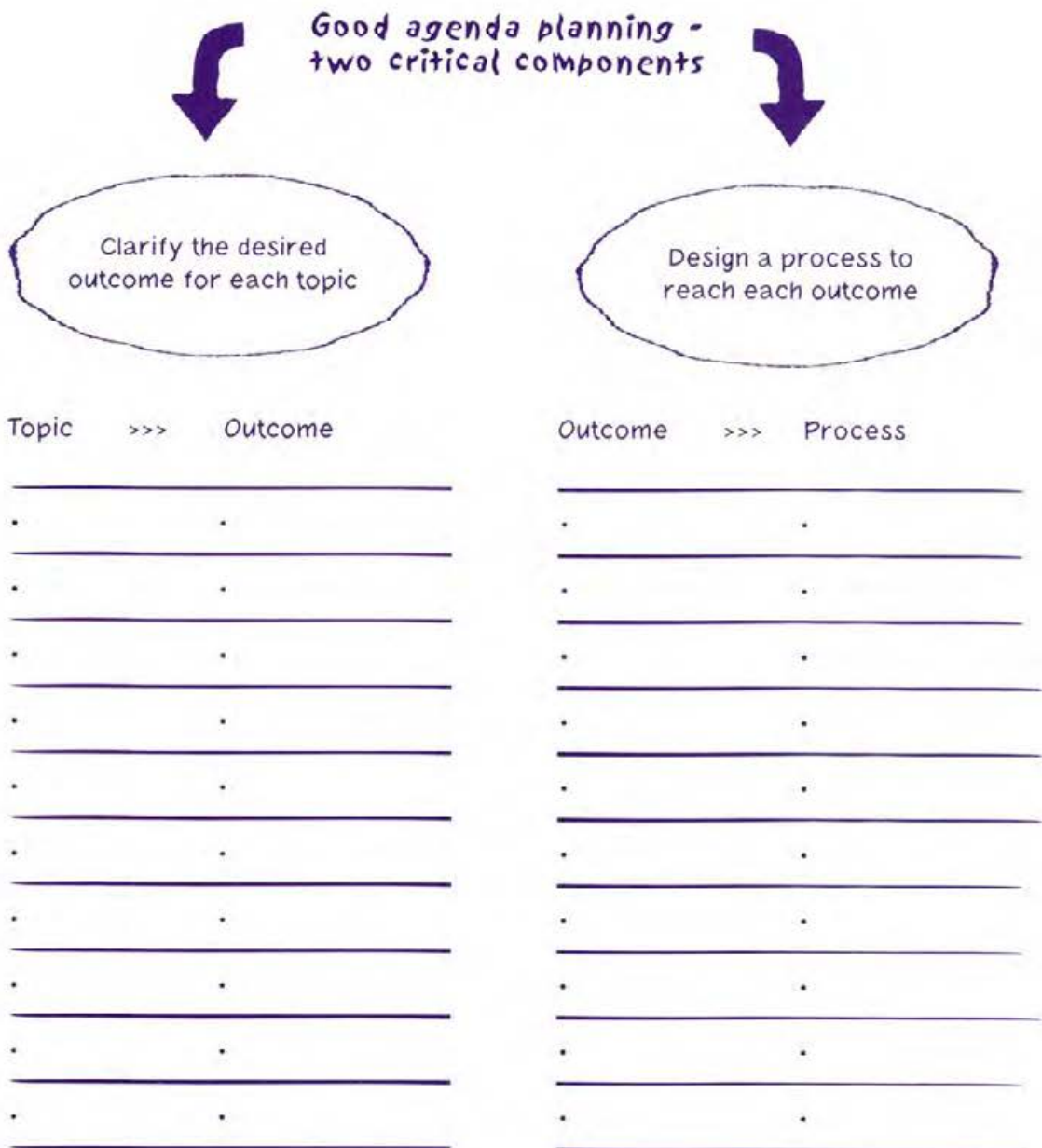
Reliable ways to run an ineffective meeting

> No planning
> An agenda with topics but no outcomes
> No shared understanding of what is to be achieved at the end of the meeting
> No breaks as the facilitator feels continuity is needed and there are time limits
> The same format for participation is used every meeting for different outcomes
> Agenda timed to minute detail with no room for lateness or new issues
> Action points not summarized but assumed
> No shared understanding of decisions reached

An agenda can help:

- identify outcomes that need to be reached by the end of the meeting
- identify a process that will help reach the outcome
- keep the meeting in focus as everyone has a shared understanding of where the process is going
- clarify the roles and responsibilities of the process
- maximize the effective and efficient use of time available

@ Two critical components of good agenda planning

The skill of developing a good agenda is to ensure that both outcomes and process are clear and that the agenda is realistic in the time allocated. Often people forget that sometimes preparation is needed for meetings, and also that follow-up actions between meetings can be more effective than trying to achieve certain outcomes in the meeting itself. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to anticipate these elements.

Good agenda planning – two critical components

Clarify the desired outcome for each topic	Design a process to reach each outcome

Topic	>>>	Outcome		Outcome	>>>	Process
·		·		·		·
·		·		·		·
·		·		·		·
·		·		·		·
·		·		·		·
·		·		·		·
·		·		·		·
·		·		·		·
·		·		·		·
·		·		·		·

Designing meetings

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> have practiced designing a meeting intended for specific outcomes

> have identified and shared areas of improvement needed in their own meetings with specific action points

Materials

1. Set of slips of the "Meeting Design Game" and glue stick for each small group
2. Copied hand-out

Time

2 hours

Steps

1. Introduce this session by explaining that in this session we will focus on another critical element of good agenda planning that is just as important for a facilitator as formulating expected outputs (see previous session) but often neglected. This is process design.

2. Ask participants to brainstorm the sorts of things that should be considered when designing the meeting process (e.g. group size, group dynamics, desired outcome, time, environment etc.).

3. Explain to participants that you will give them a fun game to do to help them practice designing a meeting process where the desired outcomes have already been identified for you, the facilitator.

4. Divide participants into groups of four and distribute the "Meeting Design Game" and flip-charts.

5. Invite the groups to read the other group's flip-charts and if they have questions or comments to write them on post-its.

6. Initiate a group discussion by asking participants about the process using questions such as:
   - *How did they start? How did they continue?*
   - *What generated most of the discussion?*

7. Continue the discussion about the outcome of each group. Check whether:
   - *the number/type of outcomes were feasible to achieve in the time allotted*
   - *the methods selected will enable them to achieve the outcome*
   - *total time was not exceeded*
   - *the methods were appropriate for the target group*

8. Wrap up this session by explaining that there is no one type of process design for achieving outcomes in a meeting. Introduce the "design mill" hand-out.

9. Explain it is the role of a facilitator to anticipate which will be the most effective design and ensure that the outcome is reached with all group members feeling comfortable.

10. Distribute the hand-out.

Comments

This session is closely related to the previous one that deals with formulating desired outcomes.

Design game "facilitating forest department planning"

Design the meeting process!

You have been asked as a facilitator to attend the monthly meeting of the local forest department to help them plan their work for the next six months and make some decisions on their support for local forest user groups. You feel very honored because, for a long time now, you have criticized them for not involving their own staff enough in work planning, as normally it's a top down process.

They have given you a very broad mandate as they are not used to designing participatory planning meetings. They have just told you that by the end of the meeting (which will be held one afternoon for three hours) they would like to have a work plan established for the next six months. You recognize that there is a need to better articulate this expected outcome but you are also conscious that the time will be limited so you may have to think about whether follow-up actions will be needed after this meeting.

You are asked as a team to design this meeting, according to your ideas. It is up to you to select the most appropriate outcomes, topics, and methods so as to design the most effective meeting possible but you cannot exceed the three hour time limit. You will also need to take into account that maybe those attending the meeting have a negative meeting culture so will not be used to a new format and will need some breaks for tea and coffee.

Meeting design for Forest Department planning		
Group:		
Time: three hours		
Proposed objectives:		
Desired outcomes:	Methods & time:	
Rationale for selection and linkages between objectives, topics and methods:		

You have 20 minutes to do this activity. Paste the paper slips using the following framework and write the rationale for your specific mix of elements.

Remember, as facilitator you are also responsible for suggesting a process that can be realistically implemented. You can make suggestions to the department regarding further meetings or follow up actions they may need to arrange based on the rationale of your design.

You will be asked to present your proposed meeting format to the head of the division who is a bit of a sceptic of participatory meetings so be sure to have the rationale for your design well thought out.

Enlarge and cut into slips (use different colors for objectives, desired outcomes and method/time)

Overall objectives:

- to evaluate the previous year's work
- to make a work plan for the unit for the next six months
- to make individual work plans for the next six months

Desired outcomes:

- list of reflections of the extensionists' best moments, and the constraints, of the previous work planning period
- a list of the areas in which extensionists need to improve in order to become more effective for the new planning period
- identification of all areas of commitment and responsibility as a unit for next 6 months
- identification of the main priority goals for the unit for the next six months
- identification of the key activities for each individual work plan
- shared and discussed effectiveness of all forest user groups in the area
- identification of priority user groups for support for the next six months
- a formulated action plan which includes the completion and submission of individual work plans
- a formulated and designed budget for the overall unit

Method and time

- ...minutes warming up/ introduction
- ...minutes summarizing and wrapping up
- ...minutes brainstorming
- ...minutes spent in buzz groups
- ...minutes brainstorming
- ...minutes in fishbowl discussion
- ...minutes sharing experiences during group work
- ...minutes spent in exercise in groups
- ...minutes spent on case studies in small groups
- ...minutes spent in plenary discussion
- ...minutes spent on individual work
- ...minutes displaying and sharing group work
- Add your own:...

Designing your meeting process

⊡ The design process based on desired outcomes

The skill of developing a good process is to ensure that the desired outcomes and agenda can be realistically implemented in the time allocated. Often people forget that preparation is needed for meetings as well as follow-up actions between meetings. Follow-up actions are usually more effective than trying to achieve certain outcomes in the meeting itself. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to anticipate this.

Good agenda planning - two critical components

Clarify the desired outcome for each topic

Design a process to reach each outcome

⊡ The challenge of process design

In order to achieve the outcome facilitators need to plan and anticipate alternative processes for the meeting to enable the group to reach the expected outcome. This is a big challenge for a facilitator as the process must be both flexible but structured. This is where a facilitator may need to be very creative.

So even as a field facilitator why not try preparing an agenda! You don't necessarily need to photocopy and distribute it to farmers but it can help you stay on track and you can find other ways of verbally introducing it at different points in the meeting. It can be an effective planning tool. An example could look like this...

Topic	Outcome	Process format	Who/other responsibilities
1. Reflection on last six months of forest user group performance	• A list of best moments • A list of constraints • A list of areas to improve in the future • Action plan	• Fishbowl discussion for 20 minutes • Small group discussions for improvements • Sharing and plenary for action points	• Field worker to facilitate • Small group volunteers to keep record of discussion
2. Schedule for forest patrol			
3. Operational plan			
4. Etc.			

6. Practicing facilitation skills

- Practicing listening
- Practicing questioning
- Practicing probing
- Practicing paraphrasing
- Practicing dialogue
- Practicing reframing and inclusive solutions
- Practicing tracking and finding common ground
- Practicing personal feedback

Practicing listening

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

▷ can explain the difference between hearing and listening

▷ have experienced "deeper" listening and identified what was different about this experience from the usual listening experiences

▷ can explain why listening is difficult by listing some listening barriers.

▷ have identified their own listening skill profile to help them improve their skills for the rest of the course

▷ can list what to do and what not to do while listening as a facilitator

Materials

1. Copied hand-out and listening skills assessment sheet

2. Enough blindfolds for each participant

Time

1 hour

Steps

1. Start with the following energizer. Ask participants not to write down anything while solving the following riddle (puzzle). Read out aloud (don't hand out):

   You are a bus driver. At first the bus is empty but at the next stop eight people get on. At the second stop one gets off and six get on. At the third stop nobody gets off or on. At the fourth stop five get on and eight get off. At the fifth stop nine get off and three get on. What is the name of the bus driver?

   Answer: Your Name

2. Reflect on what happened by asking the following questions:

   ◎ *Why did most people not know the answer? (missed the beginning, side-tracked, assumed what the problem was)*

   ◎ *How does this relate to listening in reality? Can this happen?*

   ◎ *What is the difference between hearing and listening?*

   ◎ *How does this relate to listening as a facilitator?*

3. Explain that listening is the most fundamental facilitation skill for any facilitator because all other facilitation skills rely on effective listening. Following this energizer and the short reflection exercise explain that this session will focus on listening and identifying some of the main barriers to listening and will include a self-assessment of participants own listening skills.

4. Explain that the next exercise is designed to provide participants with a deeper listening experience and an opportunity to reflect on the experience. Explain that in order to create an atmosphere for deeper listening participants will be asked to wear blindfolds and sit in groups and talk to each other. Clarify that it is very important that everyone behaves normally and feels free to speak whenever they like as if they were having a normal discussion.

5. Divide the participants into groups of four. Ask each group to sit together and provide each participant with a blindfold. Ask each group to discuss why so many community forestry projects are unsuccessful? Encourage the group to ensure that everyone participates in the discussion naturally. Let the exercise run for 15 minutes. It may be an idea to have a few minutes of silence before the exercise just to allow people to reflect on the question and become comfortable wearing the blindfold.

6. After the 15 minutes is over quietly say that you are about to end the exercise and tell people to complete the conversation they are having. Ask them to remove the blindfolds in their own time and to look around the circle and see who is there.

7. After the exercise leave the groups sitting as they are and ask them to reflect on the experience in turn by asking the following questions:
   ◎ How did you feel during the discussion and why?
   ◎ How did the experience of the blindfold effect your listening? (deeper attention, no multiple conversations, interaction, thinking before you speak, judging depending on who is speaking...)
   ◎ Could you identify who was speaking and did you adapt your listening depending on who was speaking?
   ◎ How does this experience relate to improving your listening skills in daily life and as a facilitator?

8. Explain briefly some of the barriers to listening well (see hand-out) which we need to be aware of in order to improve our listening skills. Try to relate this to the experiences in the blindfold exercise.

9. Distribute the listening skill assessment hand-out and ask people to reflect on their own listening skills bearing in mind some of the experiences from the exercise, and being honest with themselves.

10. Ask participants to form groups of four and write down the do's and don'ts on a flip-chart about listening as facilitators, as follows:

11. A good facilitator will... A good facilitator will not...

12. Display the flip-charts and let everybody walk around and read what others have written.

13. Finish the session by distributing the hand-out on listening barriers and stress that understanding listening barriers is not only helpful in improving our listening skills but is also helpful in understanding the problems others might have while listening. Remind people that they can practice their listening skills almost continuously during the course.

Comments

In reflection of the blindfold exercise participants tend to focus on the experience of "blindness" effecting communication. As a trainer you may need to bring the focus of reflection back to how the "blindness" effected listening.

Listening

Good listening is more difficult than we think

Listening seems to be a very easy thing to do. In reality we think we listen, but we actually hear only what we want to hear! This is not a deliberate process, it is almost natural. Listening carefully and creatively (picking out positive aspects, problems, difficulties and tensions) is the most fundamental skill for facilitation. Therefore, we should try to understand what can hinder it, in order to improve our skills. Listed below are so-called barriers to listening that may prevent effective and supportive listening. Being aware of them will make it easier to overcome them.

> Hearing
> is passive
> Listening is:
> - active
> - paying attention
> - searching for meaning

Listening barriers

On-off listening

This unfortunate listening habit comes from the fact that most people think about four times faster than the average person can speak. Thus the listener has about three to four minutes of 'spare thinking time' for each minute of listening. Sometimes the listener may use this extra time to think about her or his own personal affairs and troubles instead of listening, relating and summarizing what the speaker has to say. This can be overcome by paying attention to more than just the speech, but also watching body language like gestures, hesitation etc.
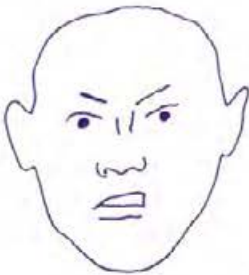
Red-flag listening

To some people, certain words are like a red flag to a bull. When they hear them, they get upset and stop listening. These terms may vary for every group of participants, but some are more universal such as "tribal", "black", "capitalist", and "communist" etc. Some words are so 'loaded' that the listener tunes out immediately. The speaker loses contact with her or him and both fail to develop an understanding of the other.

Open ears – closed mind listening

Sometimes 'listeners' decide quite quickly that either the subject or the speaker is boring, and what is being said makes no sense. Often they jump to the conclusion that they can predict what the speaker will say and then conclude that there is no reason to listen because they will hear nothing new if they do.

Glassy-eyed listening

Sometimes 'listeners' look at people intently, and seem to be listening, although their minds may be on other things. They drop back into the comfort of their own thoughts. They get glassy-eyed, and often a dreamy or absent-minded
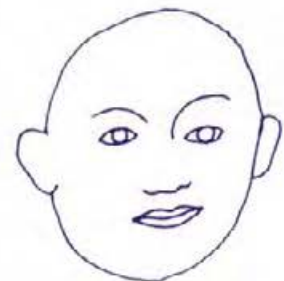
expression appears on their faces. If we notice many participants looking glassy-eyed in sessions, we have to find an appropriate moment to suggest a break or change in pace.

Too-deep-for-me listening

When listening to ideas that are too complex and complicated, we often need to force ourselves to and to understand it. Listening and understanding what the person is saying might result in us finding the subject and the speaker quite interesting. Often if one person does not understand, others do not either, and it can help the group to ask for clarification or an example if possible.
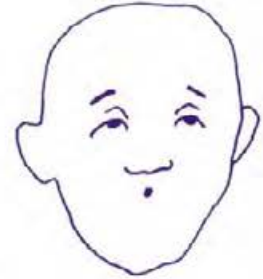
Don't-rock-the-boat listening

People do not like to have their favorite ideas, prejudices and points of view overturned and many do not like to have their opinions challenged. So, when a speaker says something that clashes either with what the listener thinks or believes in, then s/he may unconsciously stop listening or even become defensive. Even if this is done consciously, it is better to listen and find out what the speaker thinks first, in order to understand his or her position fully. Responding constructively can be done later.

Do's and don'ts of listening

When listening we should try to do the following:
- show interest
- be patient
- be understanding
- be objective
- express empathy
- search actively for meaning
- help the speaker develop competence and motivation in formulating thoughts, ideas and opinions
- cultivate the ability to be silent when silence is necessary

When listening we should avoid doing the following:
- rushing the speaker
- arguing
- interrupting
- passing judgment too quickly in advance
- giving advice unless it is requested by the other person
- jumping to conclusions
- letting the speaker's emotions affect my own too directly

My skill as a listener

A short quiz

Listed below are 15 questions that relate to the ability
to listen to others. Rate each question by placing a
mark in the appropriate box. Try to be as honest and
precise as possible in your rating. This is not a test but
a tool to help you assess what your strengths and
weaknesses are in listening.

When you have rated all the questions, draw lines to connect your dots in the
boxes. This will give you a profile of your abilities as a listener. By becoming
aware of your weaknesses as a listener you can start improving!

Questions	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
Do I listen for feelings, attitudes, perceptions, and values as well as for facts?					
Do I try to listen for what is not said?					
Do I avoid interrupting the person who is speaking to me?					
Do I actually pay attention to who is speaking instead of pretending I am?					
Do I listen even if I don't like a person or agree with him/her, or find him/her dull?					
Do I work hard to avoid being distracted by the speaker's style, clothing, voice or behavior?					
Do I make certain that a person's status has no influence on how well I listen to her/him?					
Do I avoid letting my expectations-hearing what I want to hear-influence my listening?					

Practicing questioning

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> have experienced the difference between asking open and closed questions
> can explain why and when asking (instead of answering) questions can be an effective facilitation technique

Materials

1. Copied exercise
2. Copied hand-out

Time

1 hour and 30 minutes

Steps

1. Introduce the session by saying that instead of answering questions, asking questions can be a very powerful facilitation tool.
2. Ask participants to form buzz groups and discuss some of the reasons why we ask questions as facilitators. Spend five minutes on this task. List the answers participants have come up with. Add your own if necessary (see hand-out).
3. Ask what the difference is between a closed and open question, and invite them to give examples for both.
4. Explain the mechanics and procedure of using triads or dyads to practice.
    ◎ *Triads: each trio selects a speaker, a listener and an observer. After the first practice, the roles rotate allowing each person to act in each of the three roles.*
    ◎ *Dyads: same principle but in pairs without the observer.*
5. Distribute the exercise and invite participants to start practicing in triads or dyads. Monitor the time while the participants are asking each other questions. Make sure they reverse roles in time.
6. Give them 15 minutes to do this and then invite them to reflect on the exercise by answering the reflection questions mentioned on the exercise sheet.
7. Summarize the main learning points and distribute the hand-out.

Comments

If participants are familiar with open and closed questions from RRA/PRA you only need to refresh their memories about the difference and ask them which questions they think are more appropriate in the context of facilitating participatory decision-making.

![running figure icon] **exercise**

Open and closed questions

Discuss the work of your partner in her or his organization:

- ◎ Round 1 – use only closed questions
- ◎ Round 2 – use only open questions

After five minutes switch roles and repeat the procedure.

Reflect on the exercise by asking yourself the following questions:

- ◎ What happened when you asked closed questions?
- ◎ What happened when you asked open questions?
- ◎ What were the differences in the quality of your conversation when using the two types of questions?
- ◎ How does this relate to asking questions as a facilitator? Which type of questions would be most appropriate, when and why?

Using questions

Why ask questions as a facilitator?

There are certain skills that can help a facilitator conduct more effective meetings. First, be a good listener and observer. Next become skilled in the art of asking the right questions in the right way at the right time.

There are several ways you can do this. You can – if you feel you have all the answers and want to impress everyone with your knowledge – simply give 'the answer'. Or you can seek participation and give group members the opportunity to reflect, think, discover and make decisions by themselves.

Reasons	Examples
1. Gain people's involvement.	*How do you feel about...?*
2. Get a feeling for peoples' thoughts, ideas or opinions.	*What is your idea about...?* *What do you think?*
3. Involve quiet people.	*Lin, what do you think?*
4. Recognize key-contributors.	*Thuba, that's an interesting idea. Tell us more about it.*
5. Manage the meeting time.	*OK, we've spent quite a bit of time on that question. How do you feel about moving on?*
6. Gain understanding by exploring both sides of an issue.	*That is one way of looking at it. Let's look at the other side. What would happen if you...?*

Types of questions

There are several types of questions we can use for different purposes:

Types	Uses	Risks
General questions Addressed to the group as a whole, perhaps written on an overhead or flip-chart.	Stimulates everybody's thinking. Useful for starting a discussion. Trend setting.	Question is not directed at anyone in particular, it may not be answered. A wrong question can misdirect the process. Unless sufficient time is allowed for thinking, it may not work.
Direct questions Addressed to an individual by name, or a sub-group.	Good chance that it will be answered. Useful to involve silent or shy farmers. Can break the monopoly of discussion by more vocal group members. Can tap a specific resource person in the group, e.g. forester, gender specialist. Can be used to refer to a point that was lost due to irrelevant comments by others.	It can embarrass unprepared group members. More effective if followed by a general question to put the focus back to the group as a whole.
Open-ended questions Start with who, what, when, where, how. Why questions that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no.	To get concrete feedback or information. It will make group members think. Quality of the discussion will improve as new details are discovered. Good for analyzing problem situations (Why did this happen? What needs to change?).	Such questions are more difficult to answer. Questions starting with why may be perceived as threatening. If facilitator cannot build on the responses, usefulness is reduced.
Factual question Asked to ascertain factual information.	To clarify factual "fogginess". To steer away from assumptions or generalizations. Valuable in initial stages of discussion.	A few group members who know the facts may monopolize discussion.
Re-directed question The facilitator throws a question asked of her/him back to the group.	Ensures that the answers come from group members. Can provoke lively exchanges among group members.	May give the impression that the facilitator is not knowledgeable. Can be perceived as an avoiding tactic.
Leading question The expected answer is implicit in the question.	Useful in redirecting a discussion that has gone off track. Helpful in facilitating control and taking charge of the process.	Can be manipulative. Good points can be lost due to facilitator's anxiety to maintain control.

Practicing probing

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> can explain why probing is an important facilitation skill
> can explain when probing is a useful tool in facilitation
> have actively practiced probing in a fun way

Materials

1. Copied informant sheets - one for each small group
2. Copied hand-outs on probing

Time

1 hour and 30 minutes

Steps

1. Introduce the session by saying that during this session participants will be able to practice their probing skills in a fun way. Recall the differences between open and closed questions and the importance of the six helper words – what, how, where, when, who and why .

2. Explain that participants will be divided into small groups to solve the same riddle.

3. Ask participants to form groups of four to five. Distribute the exercise and explain the rules.

4. Observe the groups as much as possible during the exercise (this will give you specific questions to ask during the reflection exercise).

5. When most groups have solved the riddle, reassemble and congratulate them.

6. Get participants to reflect on what happened by asking:

   ◎ *What happened? What was your first question and why?*

   ◎ *How did you think of new questions to ask? Did it happen that the same question was asked by different detectives? Why did that happen?*

   ◎ *Why is it important to formulate the next question based on the answer of the former question? (to dig into the matter, to increase understanding)*

   ◎ *Does anybody know what this skill is called i.e. asking questions based on the answer of earlier questions? (probing)*

   ◎ *Why is probing an important facilitation skill? (to draw people out, to solve problems, to clarify questions, to get the inputs and opinions of people, to facilitate dialogue)*

   ◎ *What helped you probe well? (active listening, building on ideas, creative thinking, clarifying information, analyzing the problem carefully)*

   ◎ *What stopped you probing well? (not listening carefully, jumping from one question to the other, lack of creative thinking, making assumptions)*

7. Link this exercise to probing as a facilitator and ask at what times is probing useful for a facilitator? Explain that probing is critical for achieving mutual understanding and therefore an extremely important skill to use in the "groan zone".
8. Summarize the learning points related to asking questions and probing as a facilitator.
9. Distribute the hand-out.

Comments

Although participants will get excited if the riddle is solved and will want to know who solved it, the challenge for the trainer is to bring them back to how they did it in terms of effective probing.

Below are some alternative riddles to use

Riddle

Walter spent three days in the hospital. He was neither sick nor injured, but when it was time to leave he had to be carried out. Why?

Solution: Walter was a newborn baby.

Riddle

A man held up a bank on a hot day. He was caught later by the police. On a colder day he would probably not have been caught? Why?

Solution: The man wore a short sleeved shirt and his name was tattooed on his arm.

Riddle

A man lived all by himself. He never went out and no-one visited him. One day he watered all his plants, turned off the lights and left the building never to return again. His action resulted in the death of six men. Why?

Solution: The man was a light house keeper. By turning off the lights he had turned off the beacon light at the top of the light house. Unable to see the rocky shore a ship ran aground and six sailors had drowned.

Practicing probing: guidelines for the informant

1. Tell the group that they have to solve a riddle in ten minutes.

2. Clarify roles

   ◉ **Your role as informer:** *you can only answer the questions asked by detectives, but you cannot give any hints or extra information that is not directly asked for*

   ◉ **Their role as team of detectives:** *listen carefully to the riddle and use their questioning and listening skills to find the solution*

3. Don't show the riddle to the group but read it slowly and clearly to the group. If the groups ask you to read it out loud again you can do so, but do not add any extra explanation.

> **Riddle**
> A man was found dead in the desert. Near him was a package. If he had opened the package he would not have died. What was in the package?
>
> **Answer: a parachute!**

Using probing as a facilitator

What is probing?

Probing is asking follow-up questions in order to gain more understanding, such as:

- Can you explain further?
- Could you put it in another way?
- Can you please tell me more about that?
- But why, how, who, when, where?
- Anything else?

Probing is rather like peeling away the layers of an onion The objective is to move towards the center of the onion This means that by probing the facilitator can get closer to the real reason behind something or gain as much understanding as possible.

Why is probing an important skill for a facilitator and when should it be used?

Probing has many different purposes. It can be used to:

- draw people out
- clarify questions, inputs and/or opinions,
- create dialogue
- solve problems

How to probe well?

Do's	Don'ts
▣ Listen actively	▣ Judge while listening
▣ Build the next question on the understanding of the previous answer	▣ Jump from one topic or issue to another
▣ Clarify information	▣ Make assumptions
▣ Single out the problem or main points	▣ Lose track by getting bogged down in details or side-tracked

Practicing paraphrasing

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> can explain what paraphrasing is and when it is useful

> have practiced paraphrasing in a safe environment

Materials

Copied hand-out

Time

1 hour and 30 minutes

Steps

1. Start the session by explaining that we will introduce another facilitation skill, that is probably new to most. It is called paraphrasing. Ask the participants if they can define or guess what paraphrasing is. Write the term and its definition down. Explain the difference between paraphrasing and summarizing.

2. Explain that you will give some examples to illustrate the meaning of paraphrasing. Ask a couple of open questions to various participants and paraphrase their answers.

3. Reflect on what you did and introduce the paraphrasing exercise.

4. Allow participants to experience the usefulness of paraphrasing by practicing paraphrasing in groups of two or three for five minutes each (They could talk, for example, about why they think community forestry is important in their country).

5. Monitor the time while participants are asking each other questions. Make sure they rotate the roles in time.

6. Invite them to return after about 20 minutes and reflect on the exercise by asking the following questions;

    ◎ *How did it feel to paraphrase? What made it difficult? What helped?*

    ◎ *How did you feel hearing your own ideas paraphrased if it was done well? (good, respected, understood etc.)*

    ◎ *How was it when you realize that your words were misunderstood? (frustrated, disappointed – which is why it is so important to check!)*

    ◎ *When do you think you would need to use this skill?*

    ◎ *Is it possible to do it too often? If so, what would be the result? (if you paraphrase too often, it gets boring and people will become lazy listeners themselves)*

7. Finish the session by asking participants to recall what the benefits of paraphrasing are (see hand-out) and distribute the hand-out.

Comments

Variation: The facilitator gives an example of a time when they did not listen well. The next person paraphrases what the facilitator said. This person then gives an example and the person to their right paraphrases this, and so on.
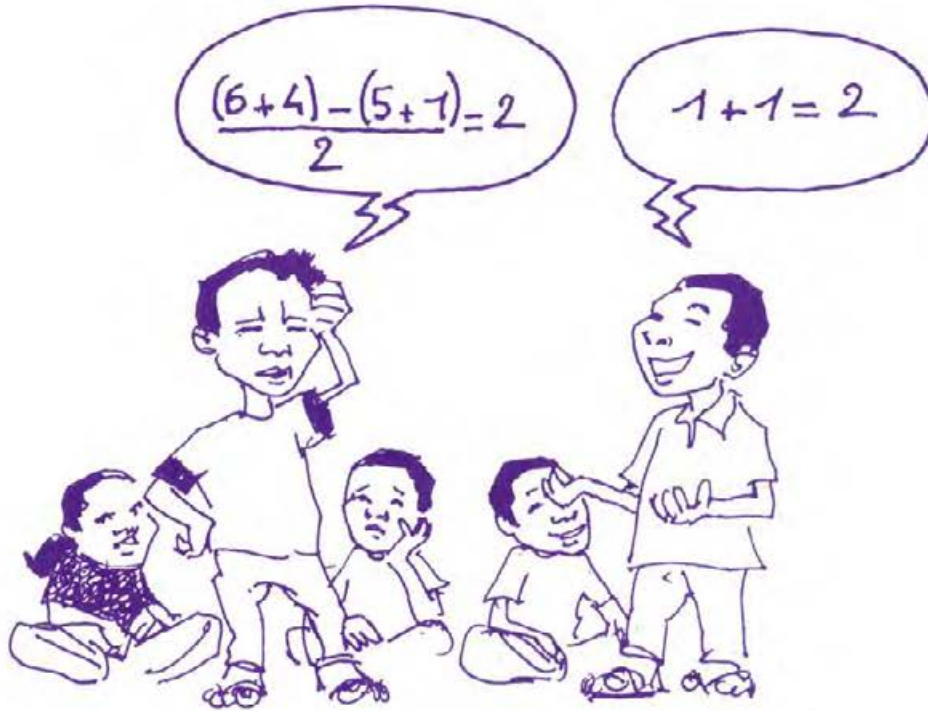
Paraphrasing

◙ What is paraphrasing?

Paraphrasing is repeating what somebody has said, using your own words.

◙ Why use paraphrasing?

Benefits for the facilitator

The technique forces you to listen very carefully, because when the person has finished speaking, you know that you will need to repeat what was said. In addition, you have the opportunity to find out whether you really understood what was said.

Benefits for the speaking person

Paraphrasing has both a calming and a clarifying effect. It reassures the speaker that his or her ideas are worth listening to. And it provides the speaker with the chance to see if others are listening to his/her ideas. In other words, it supports people to think out loud.

Benefits for other people listening

They get a second chance to understand what the speaker has tried to share.

When to use paraphrasing?

Paraphrasing can be used when a person makes very long, complicated or confusing statements, or when a person has problems phrasing his/her own thoughts clearly.

> Do not paraphrase too often
> as it will slow down interactions and
> eventually group members will become
> lazy listeners themselves.

How do you paraphrase?

Paraphrasing uses the following four-step model:

1. Listen carefully.

2. Use your own words to say what you think the person said, for example starting with:

   ' In other words...' or

   'Do you mean that...' or

   'It sounds like what you are saying is...'

3. Check by saying something like:

   'Is that correct?' or

   'Did I get it?'

4. If it is not correct keep asking for clarification until you understand what s/he meant.

Note: If the speaker's statement is one or two sentences, use roughly the same number of words when you paraphrase it. If the speaker's statement is too long, summarize it.

Practicing dialogue

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> can explain the difference between dialogue and discussion
> can explain why dialogue is often more useful than discussion during participatory decision-making in a multi-stakeholder environment
> have practiced creating and facilitating dialogue

Materials

1. Copied observation sheet
2. Copied hand-out

Time

1 hour and 30 minutes

Steps

1. Introduce the session by telling participants that we will focus on practicing dialogue in situations where there are multiple perspectives. Draw the continuum (see hand-out) on the white board and ask the group what the main purpose of debate, discussion and dialogue is. Clarify if needed. Ask them which type of exchange would be most useful for achieving mutual understanding.
2. Explain that the role of the facilitator is to support a group engaging in dialogue. Ask them which skills they think would be useful for doing this.
3. Explain that we will practice facilitating dialogue in groups of four, using the skills of probing and paraphrasing. The following roles will rotate among the members: one facilitator, one observer and two people having a dialogue.
4. Break the group into fours and distribute copies of the observation sheet.
5. Allow participants to practice creating dialogue for five minutes each by reaching a consensus on a hot/controversial issue (select something appropriate like a gender or smoking issue). Monitor the time while participants are practicing the dialogue. Make sure they rotate roles in time.
6. Invite them to return after about 20 minutes and reflect on the exercise by asking the following questions:
   ◎ *How did it go?*
   ◎ *What was difficult? What helped?*
   ◎ *When did you miss opportunities and why? (difficult to find the right timing, or to interrupt at appropriate times)*
   ◎ *Did the facilitator bring in his or her own suggestions?*
   ◎ *What happened if probing and paraphrasing was not used for some time? (discussion becomes more heated)*

◎ *What happened when probing and paraphrasing was done well? (discussion becomes less heated)*

◎ *How does this relate to facilitating dialogue in village meetings? (Groups can move very quickly into heated discussions, especially during the groan zone. As a facilitator we have to be alert and try to get the group back into dialogue again).*

7. Distribute the hand-out.

Comments

Probing and paraphrasing are used as indicators for dialogue. This session is therefore a good follow-up after practicing probing and paraphrasing.
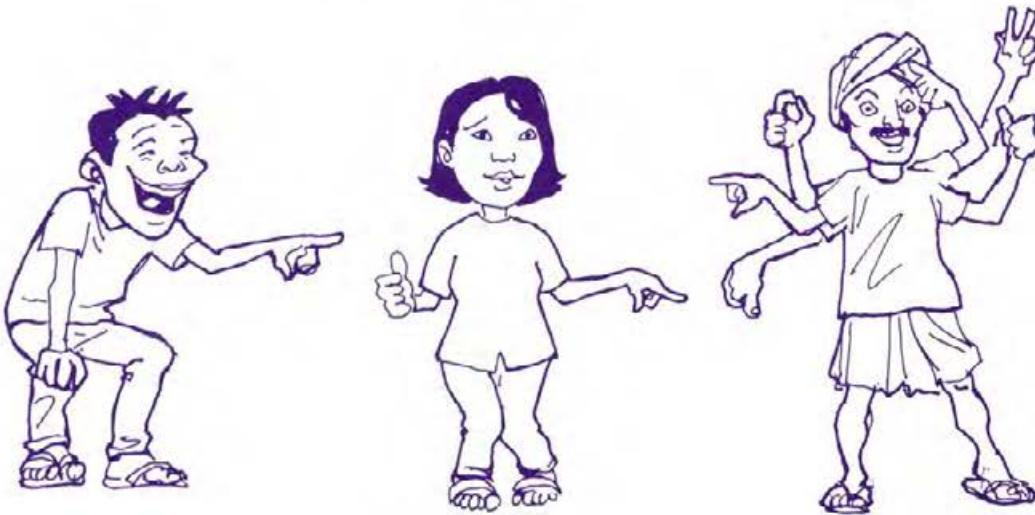
Observation sheet: assessing dialogue

◙ Introduction

Probing and paraphrasing are essential to create dialogue. Please take the role of observer and assess whether your team probes and paraphrases effectively. Note down examples of probing and paraphrasing that lead to better understanding. Also look for missed opportunities. For example, someone's point of view may not have been completely understood and paraphrasing or probing could have helped.

◙ Examples of probing and paraphrasing

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

◙ Examples of missed opportunities

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Creating dialogue

What is dialogue?

Dialogue is an open and frank conversation for which all people take responsibility and try to understand each other.

What is the difference between debate, discussion and dialogue?

The best way to explain the difference between debate, discussion and dialogue is to put them on a continuum. At one end of the continuum is debate, at the other end dialogue with discussion in the middle as follows:

Debate < < < < < < < Discussion > > > > > > > Dialogue

Main purpose of debate:
to sharpen the mind by challenging and being challenged
- Based on competition
- Trying to convince the others
- Closed minds
- Talking
- Statements
- Firm opinions
- Looking for their solution

Main purpose of dialogue:
Sharing thoughts in order to understand each other's point of view and foster inclusive solutions
- Based on thinking together
- Trying to understand the others
- Open minds
- Listening
- Open questions
- Probing
- Looking for the best solution

Why is dialogue important during participatory decision-making in a multi-stakeholder environment? Dialogue is essential to:

> create an environment of trust
> create an openness for sharing and listening
> encourage mutual understanding
> foster effective problem solving
> foster inclusive solutions

How to create dialogue?

1. Clarify the objectives of the meeting or session (and if necessary explain the difference between dialogue and discussion).
2. Stress the importance of effective listening for mutual understanding.
3. Probe and paraphrase and encourage group members to do the same.
4. Challenge preconceived ideas or assumptions.

When people are exchanging ideas, views or opinions they can move gradually from one end of the continuum to the other, but also abrupt changes can take place especially during the "groan zone". A facilitator should be alert to the symptoms that signal the move towards debating and try to move the group back into dialogue mode.

Practicing reframing and inclusive solutions

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> can explain the characteristics of an inclusive solution and why they are important in group decision-making

> can explain the three types of thinking involved in developing inclusive solutions

> can explain how creative reframing can help generate inclusive solutions

Materials

1. Copied case study cut into two halves
2. Flip-chart or transparency with "two ways of looking at the same problem" written on it
3. Copied hand-out

Time

2 hours

Steps

1. Introduce the session by reading the old Chinese Taoist story. Ask them what the story tells them. (Any event depends upon the 'frame' with which we perceive it. When we change the frame, we change the meaning.) Explain that this was just a warm-up for more creative thinking. Creative thinking is important in facilitation and when trying to generate inclusive solutions. Refresh their understanding of what an inclusive solution is.

2. Introduce that you will now simulate the way a group may go about trying to identify an inclusive solution using a real case study with the group. During the first half of the exercise the group will be involved as participants but in the second half the group will be asked to reflect on this process of looking for an inclusive solution.

3. Explain to the group that in order to find an inclusive solution we have to try to look at in a different way. Show the flip-chart or transparency of the "two ways of looking at the same problem". Ask them about the differences between the columns. Cover up some of the examples in the reframed column and ask participants to reframe some of the problem statements in buzz groups.

4. Ask participants to share their examples of the problem reframed. Explain that encouraging a group to think constructively about a problem from a different angle may help the group reach an inclusive solution.

5. Explain that the same exercise will be repeated using a real case from community forestry. Present the case by distributing the first half of the hand-out and asking them to carefully read it.

6. Ask participants to extract what they think the problem is and summarize it in one sentence. Write the problem statements on the white board. Ask participants to reframe their problem statements in the same way as in the previous exercise (constructive thinking).

7. Ask the group to synthesize in one sentence all the reframed statements. Write down the synthesized problem statement and add the question: *"What is unchangeable about our problem?"*

8. List everyone's answers. Probe further to identify any hidden assumptions and biases.
   ◎ Why do you see this aspect as unchangeable? *(challenge participants on hidden assumptions and biases)*
   ◎ What do you see as changeable and why? How could this be changed? What would need to happen to change this? (*encourage open discussion of different ideas)*

9. Clearly identify on the white board the different ideas which could help change the situation. Based on the insights of what and how things can be changed ask the group for an inclusive solution to the problem.

10. Distribute the second half of the case study to participants which includes the 'real' inclusive solution that was reached. Ask them what they think of this inclusive solution.

11. Explain to the group that you will now shift the focus of the exercise to reflect on the process of the simulation. Ask questions such as:
    ◎ *What did I try to do?*
    ◎ *What did I do first? What did I do next?*
    ◎ *Why did I ask you what was changeable and unchangeable? (to reveal biases and assumptions)*
    ◎ *How was it for you to think in this way?*
    ◎ *How would this work for stakeholders facing a real problem? (more difficult as the stakes are high and the opinions are already ingrained)*
    ◎ *What would this mean for facilitating this type of thinking?*

12. Introduce the concepts of exploring inclusive principles and reframing as tools for facilitation and the generation of inclusive solutions.

13. Distribute the hand-out.

Comments

The aim of reframing the problem in the case study is not to try and manipulate the group to come to the same solution as the people in the case study. It is to give participants experience with reframing and to show that inclusive solutions can be reached in real-life situations for complicated problems.

Be ready to probe and challenge participants if they are using jargon or hanging on to fixed assumptions.

Case study: sustainable forest management

Cut the case in half to seperate the problem and the solution


Problem

In a rainforest in New Guinea, the local people are approached by a logging corporation. The company offers to pay a lump sum for the right to clear-cut the forest and extract the hardwood trees. The deal sounds fantastic to many members of the poor forest tribe. They want to sell their only marketable good in exchange for cash. This money could be used to buy things they cannot produce themselves.

Local environmentalists, however, are alarmed. The forests will be completely and irreplaceably destroyed.

Solution

Environmentalists helped the local people set up their own logging company with a small portable saw mill that could process trees one at a time.

The cut trees were worth significantly more than the company had offered for the trees, so the people did not feel pressured to log more than was appropriate for the health of the forest. The logging company purchased the cut trees, which then resold at a profit overseas.
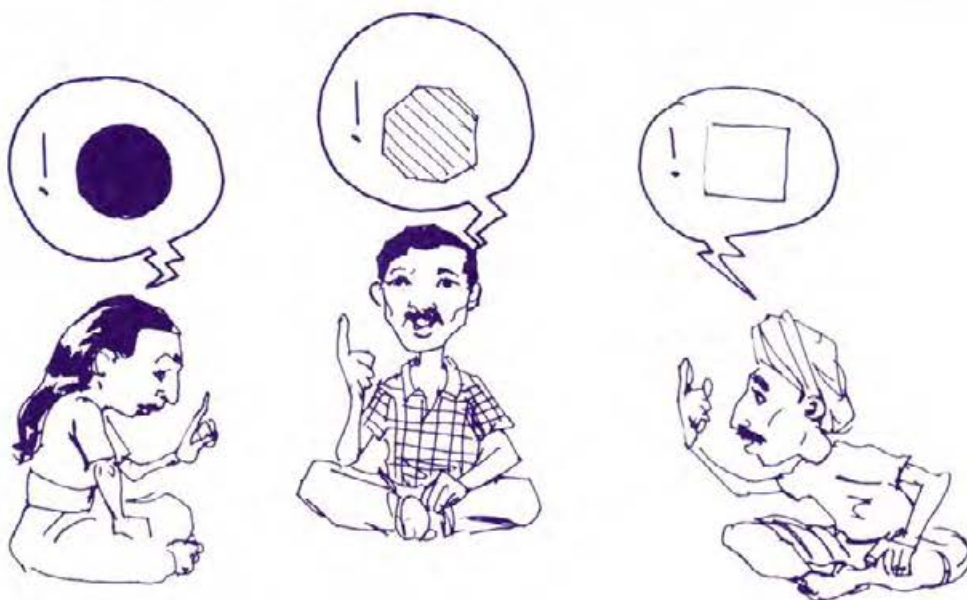
Exploring inclusive solutions

What is an inclusive solution?

An inclusive solution:

- takes into account everyone's interests
- builds on the collective ideas of the group and not an idea of one or a few individuals only
- challenges fixed assumptions (doesn't necessarily follow the old way of doing things)
- is innovative as it is usually a "new" idea generated by combining and reframing the collective ideas of the group

Why is supporting the development of inclusive solutions important for a field facilitator?

As a field facilitator in community forestry you are often faced with situations where solutions are sought by a group with many diverse interests. For example, in most cases of forest management, different groups in the community require different products from the forest and will have different ideas as to how the forest should be managed. As a facilitator you will need to encourage groups to take all interests into account in order to come up with inclusive solutions.

A non-inclusive solution often causes conflict. People whose interests have not been taken into account may decide to follow their own course of action which may conflict with the so-called solution of the group. In addition, members who feel

that the solution is non-inclusive may not feel particularly committed to follow-up plans, as there will be a lack of a sense of ownership of the solution.

How can the development of inclusive solutions be supported?

In the convergent zone, the group has managed to build a shared framework of understanding. The facilitator's main task is to help the group explore alternatives and synthesize them into a solution that will work for everyone. This is often easier than it sounds. Three types of convergent thinking will be discussed: exploring inclusive principles, creative reframing, and strengthening good ideas.

Exploring inclusive principles

Below are some principles to help people synthesize alternatives into an integrated solution. They are based on finding a solution that should work for everyone.

Search for common goals

Challenge fixed assumptions

Question anything that seems impossible

How can we satisfy all interests?

Find out how others have solved similar problems

Divide the problem into parts and solve each part separately

Step back from solutions back to needs. Find a solution that meets all needs

Self-selection let everyone do what they want

These principles are often at the heart of sustainable agreements. A facilitator can encourage group members to identify and discuss inclusive principles that might apply to their situation. This will encourage creative thinking. For example you might share with a group the same case study, discuss it and ask, "What are our group's fixed assumptions?" Real-life case studies are an excellent tool for helping groups explore inclusive principles.

Reframing the problem

There are often at least two ways of looking at the same problem. Once someone perceives the problem in a particular way he/she may find it difficult to see the same problem in any other way. The meaning that any event has for us depends on the 'frame' in which we perceive it. When we change the frame, we change the meaning. This is called *reframing*. When the meaning changes, the person's responses and behaviors also change. The more reframing you do, the more choices you have!

To look at a problem from a completely different angle rarely happens spontaneously, as it is unnatural. When a facilitator decides to encourage a group to reframe a problem, s/he often finds the main challenge is to motivate people to invest the time. A way to introduce the idea of reframing and overcoming initial resistance to it, is to provide participants with some examples which show how it works.

An old Chinese Taoist story describes a farmer in a poor country village. He was considered rich because he owned a horse that he used for ploughing, for riding around and for carrying things. One day his horse ran away. All his neighbors cried out how terrible this was, but the farmer simply said; 'Maybe'.

A few days later the horse returned and brought two wild horses with it. The neighbors were all happy with his good fortune, but the farmer just said, 'Maybe'.

The next day the farmer's son tried to ride one of the wild horses; the horse threw him off and broke the boy's leg. The neighbors all offered their sympathy for his misfortune, but the farmer again said, 'Maybe'.

The next week government officials came to the village to take young man for the army. They rejected the farmer's son because of his broken leg. When the neighbors told him how lucky he was, the farmer replied 'Maybe'.

Bandler and Grindler 1982

Two ways of looking at the same problem

Presenting the problem	Reframing the problem
It's them	It's all of us
It's a problem	It's an opportunity
We can never achieve our goal	We don't have our goal broken into realistic steps
We don't have enough money	We don't know yet how to find or generate more money.
We need more time to do all of these things	We have to decide what to do first and what to do later
We don't have any power	We have not found out how to use the little power we have more strategically
Our stakes in the problem are too different	We have not looked for the similarities yet
We don't know enough about the problem to solve it	We haven't identified where we could look for more information

Once a group has seen examples of reframing, they will be appreciate the benefits and be more inclined to look at their problem in a different way. A facilitator can help a group by asking different types of questions and encouraging them to make different kinds of statements.

The third type of thinking that is important in the convergence zone, the strengthening of good ideas, will follow in another session and hand-out (see page 189).

Questions that facilitators can use to support the process of reframing problems:

◎ Is there any other way we could look at this problem?

◎ Suppose something had not happened would that change your course of action?

◎ Is that the only way to achieve the same goal?

◎ What's unchangeable about our problem? To identify any hidden assumptions or biases.

Practicing tracking and finding common ground

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> can explain the importance of tracking and finding common ground in a discussion which includes diverse perspectives, and how this contributes to inclusive solutions

> can explain the three main steps in tracking

> can explain in what group situations tracking would be useful and in what group situations finding common ground is useful

> can explain the four main steps toward finding common ground

Materials

1. Hand-out
2. Any props for simulation

Time

1 hour and 30 minutes

Steps

1. Open the session by referring back to the "groan zone" introduced in a previous session. Explain that this session will focus on two fundamental skills that can help manage diverse perspectives in a group and support group members when they are in the "groan zone" moving them towards the convergence zone. Explain that this session will introduce these two skills and provide an opportunity to practice them in the exercise "facilitating inclusive solutions".

2. Explain to the group that the trainers and some volunteers will simulate a short group discussion with one trainer as the facilitator. Ask participants to observe and listen to the discussion carefully. At the end of the simulation they will be asked what they would have done if they were the facilitator.

3. Simulate the discussion (see exercise sheet) ensuring that it is ended at a dramatic decision point for the facilitator.

4. Reflect on this simulation with the group asking questions such as:
   ◎ *What happened?*
   ◎ *Why did the group get irritated with each other and the facilitator? (This is possibly because the facilitator tells them they are off track whereas actually they are just thinking from their own perspective.)*
   ◎ *How did group members feel about the facilitator's interventions?*
   ◎ *What would you have done if you were the facilitator?*

5. List the group's ideas as to what they would have done. Ask those with the strongest opinions if they would like to have a go at facilitating, re-enacting the situation.

6. Reenact the discussion again, more or less as it was from the beginning, but with a different facilitator (participant volunteer) and encourage members to respond to interventions by the facilitator.

   Reflect on this second simulation asking questions such as:

   ◎ *What happened?*

   ◎ *What were the different threads of discussion?*

   ◎ *What helped the discussion?*

   ◎ *What hindered it?*

7. Repeat this procedure with participant volunteers until an example of 'effective tracking' is illustrated.

8. Introduce the concept of tracking to the group. Explain that tracking can help keeping track of the various lines of thought that are going on in a single discussion. This is essential in situations primarily where people need help as they are focused primarily on clarifying their own ideas.

9. Explain the three steps involved in tracking (see hand-out).

10. Introduce the idea that in some groups diverse perspectives and ideas can become polarized and this may lead to conflict. In this case tracking needs to be adapted, as the facilitator has to step back from the discussion and summarize the differences and similarities in the ideas. The main objective of this is to draw out areas of common ground and focus the group on their areas of common agreement.

11. Refer back to any examples of finding common ground in the previous simulations, if there were any.

12. Give an example of the four step process involved in finding common ground.

13. Summarize the session revisiting the "groan zone" concept and recall how these skills may help in managing groups of diverse perspectives. Remind people that these skills build on the basic skills learned earlier in the course like listening, observing and paraphrasing. Explain that tracking and finding common ground are two fundamental skills required when facilitating a group and encouraging inclusive solutions. These will be practiced in a later session.

Comments

The number of simulations enacted will depend on the time and motivation of the group. While reenacting the simulation is a very good exercise for letting participants practice these skills it can also be time consuming.

The simulation is originally intended to illustrate tracking. However, experience has shown that in some groups the concept of finding common ground can also be illustrated. The trainer needs to build on the experience of the simulation.

Guidelines for trainer simulation

You are a group of villagers discussing your plan for forest management for the next five years. A local field worker from an NGO has come to facilitate the discussion of how to go about the next steps in the management planning process.

Simulate a short discussion ensuring you are all representing your own agendas but not necessarily talking about the same thing at the same time.

For example the facilitator can write on the white board the words "Action Plan" and ask the group what should be done next and when? Despite the guidance of the facilitator the group members should try to get their perspective into the discussion.

One group member can be worried about participation of local women as they will not have time in the next few months to participate. She can be concerned that all the wrong people are always participating and may ask how this can be corrected.

One group member can suggest that we start with an inventory but mention that the forest officer responsible is unwilling to teach them how to do an inventory.

One group member can say that the area of forest under management planning is different from the one designated by the forest office anyway, so they are already confused.

One group member is insistent that the management plan is only an administrative duty and as long as they all agree that they can harvest the bamboo by May its OK.

Each person continually reverts to his/her perspective during the discussion for up to ten minutes. After ten minutes the facilitator can stop the group and scold them for going off track! The group can get irritated with the facilitator. Stop the simulation when there is a conflict between the members and the facilitator.

> **Possible discussion threads to be pulled out in tracking could therefore be:**
> - who participates and when are they available
> - steps of the process e.g. inventory, harvesting plan
> - administrative requirements and issues such as wrong allocation of area, unwillingness of forest officer to show the group how to do an inventory, etc.

Using tracking skills and finding common ground

What is the problem in managing divergent perspectives?

Broad participation in discussion usually produces a divergence of perspectives and this diversity can cause serious misunderstandings. Everyone approaches a discussion from his/her own individual frame of reference. The meaning, importance and priority of any given point of view are all matters of interpretation . So many ideas and perspectives emerge in a group discussion and it may often seem like nobody is focusing on the original question!

Many facilitators don't handle such situations well. They say things like "It sounds like we are getting off track" or " Let's return to our original discussion point". In effect they tell participants to stop thinking from their own frame of reference! This can cause problems as the goal of a discussion is to create a mutual understanding and if broader participation is the key then it is inevitable that people will come along with their own frameworks. If facilitators intervene with such statements it may cause a speaker to stop speaking but it certainly won't help a speaker to feel understood.

How can tracking help?

Tracking means keeping track of the various lines of thought that arise in a discussion.

- ◎ *"I think you are discussing several things at the same time. Here they are......."*
- ◎ *"I think you are discussing three different things here. For example Ron, you are ...."*

Tracking is valuable when a discussion is at its most competitive and therefore when people are least likely to be listening to each other. It is at these times that a facilitator must refrain from prioritizing or structuring the discussion. Instead he/she remains neutral and alert to the necessity for supporting each speaker. Tracking reassures everyone that at least someone is listening!

Three main steps in tracking

1. Inform the group that you would like to step back from the discussion and summarize it.

    ◎ *"It sounds like there are three conversations going on right now. I want to make sure I am tracking them."*

2. List the different conversations that have been in play.

    ◎ *"It sounds like one conversation is about roles and responsibilities. Another is about finances and a third is what you've learned by working with the last person who held this job."*

4. Lastly, check for accuracy with the group.

    ◎ *"Am I getting it right?"*

Tips for using tracking

☑ When clarifying if you have it right, don't play favorites

☑ Don't try to prioritize the tracked discussions

☑ Don't ask the group what they want to focus on next but let the group find an integrative solution

How can finding common ground help?

Listening for common ground can help when group members are polarized. It validates the group's areas of disagreement by focusing their attention on their areas of agreement. When people take positions on ideas and opinions sometimes it is difficult to recognize that they have anything in common. This isolation can be overcome when the facilitator validates both the differences in the group and the areas of common ground.

> **Tip:**
>
> Remember both tracking and finding common ground require a combination of basic facilitation skills. Listening, observing and paraphrasing are key to being successful in using such skills.

Four steps to finding common ground

1. Step back and tell the group you are going to summarize the differences and similarities.

    "Let me summarize what I am hearing from each of you. I am hearing a lot of differences but also some similarities."

2. Summarize the differences.

    "It sounds like one group wants to harvest at the beginning of next week while the others would prefer to do so after the holiday."

3. Summarize the similarities.

    "Even so, you all seem to agree that we should harvest in the next two weeks before the bamboo gets further damaged by pests."

4. Check for accuracy.

    "Have I got it right?"

Practicing personal feedback

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> can explain the purpose of feedback
> can differentiate the difference between good and bad feedback
> have demonstrated skill in giving and receiving feedback

Materials

1. Exercise copied down or on flip charts
2. Copied hand-out

Time

1 hour and 30 minutes

Steps

1. Start the session by acting out a socio-drama among the trainers showing an example of destructive and constructive feedback. Invite participants to describe what they just observed:

   ◎ *What happened?*
   ◎ *What did the person do?*
   ◎ *What was the effect?*
   ◎ *What was different during the second round?*
   ◎ *What was the effect? Why?*

2. Explain that during this session we will practice formulating feedback in a constructive way. Explain briefly what feedback is and why it is a useful technique when facilitating participatory groups (see also hand-out). If necessary make the distinction between flattering someone, criticism and feedback.

3. Tell participants that there is a trick to explaining the usefulness of feedback. Explain JOHARI'S Window and introduce its principles step by step.

   ◎ *First draw the four quadrants and explain each of them giving an example for each. Explain that we can make the 'free box' bigger.*
   ◎ *Ask how we can make the 'hidden box' smaller by enlarging the 'free box' (sharing), and give an example how we could do this.*
   ◎ *Ask how we can make the 'blind box' bigger by enlarging the 'free box' (feedback), and give an example.*

4. Discuss the purpose of feedback in a participatory environment.

5. Distribute the hand-out* and the socio-dramas, and let them work in groups of threes to act out those socio-dramas which are examples of destructive feedback.

6. Invite the whole group to share what happened after giving feedback in the wrong way. Brainstorm the do's and don'ts of constructive feedback and write them down.

7. After discussion, the small groups can act out the alternative ways of offering feedback to demonstrate the difference.

8. Review the principles once again, and summarize by stressing that in an open and trusting environment we can work more effectively together if we know how to give and receive feedback. Therefore, we will use this technique often throughout the training course. Ask them if they could use feedback in their work and, if so, how and could they do this.

Comments

*Depending on the length of the training course, this session can be shortened by not including acting out the socio-dramas and just discussing the purpose and principles of feedback, including some examples.
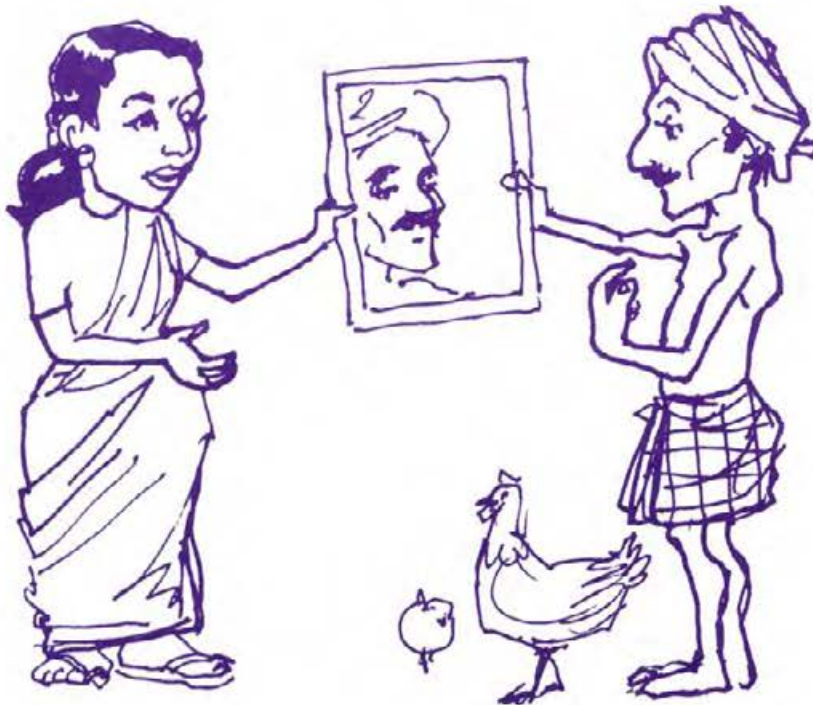
Socio-dramas: practicing feedback

Socio-drama: Lin and Beang

Lin and Beang are two facilitators attending a facilitation-skills training. Lin facilitated a brainstorming session in order to practice. After the session the other participants are invited to give Lin feedback. Beang likes to share his observations and tells Lin:

"Lin, you are always so nervous, you should be more confident in front of a group of people."

Socio-drama: Bunna and Lisa

Bunna and Lisa are two are two field workers working for an NGO. During a team meeting Bunna is talking most of the time which irritates Lisa. After half an hour she cannot listen any longer and blurts out:

"Bunna, you are very dominant. You have to be more participatory!"

Socio-drama: Thuba and Lal

Thuba is an extension worker, trying to encourage equal participation between men and women. Some men speak all the time and that irritates her. After another interruption by some of the more dominant farmers she says:

"Be quiet. The men are too talkative! You should also give the women a chance to say something."

Feedback – learning from each other

◙ What is feedback?

Personal feedback gives information about behavior and performance. Feedback can be exchanged frequently in a participatory environment, from facilitator to group, vice versa, or between group members. Unlike flattery it is not intended just to make people feel good about themselves. Unlike criticism it is intended to help people make real changes to their behavior.
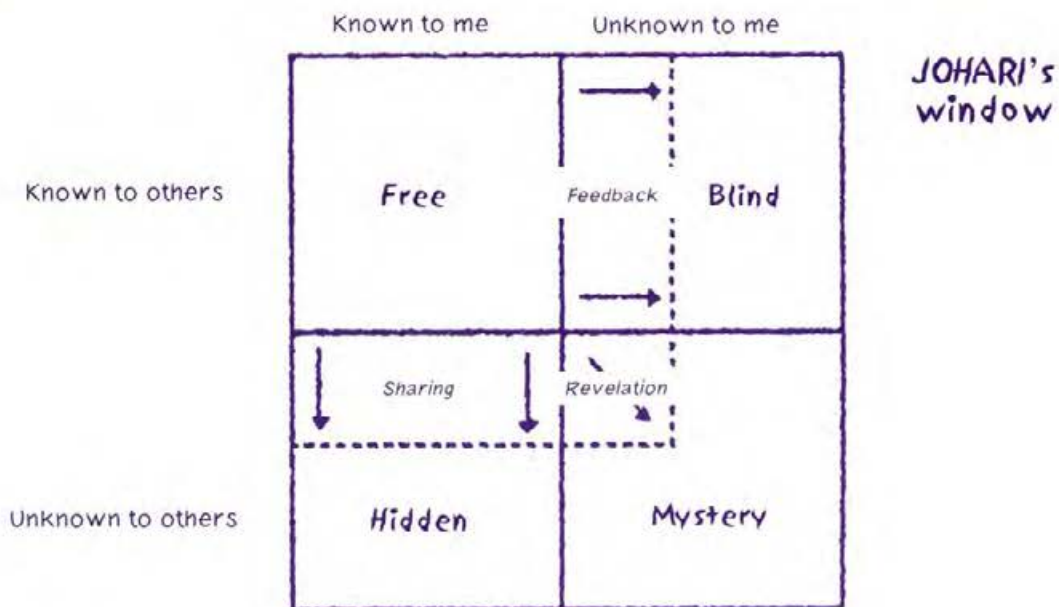
◙ What is the purpose of feedback?

Feedback is a way of helping another person understand the impact her/his behavior has on others. Feedback helps a person keep behavior "on target" and thus improve her/his performance.

Therefore feedback from trainers and other participants during this course will help you to become more aware about your strengths and weaknesses as a facilitator. You will be practicing giving and receiving feedback regularly throughout this course. This is also important to enable you to facilitate personal feedback in your own job. Every participatory group, whether it is your colleagues or villagers, will benefit from constructive feedback. At the same time it can be a tool for you as a facilitator to deal with difficult group members or group dynamics.

◙ How does feedback work?

Getting familiar with JOHARI's Window will help to understand the effect of feedback. Look at the following picture. It has the shape of a window with four frames. It is called JOHARI's window after the people who worked it out. The window is a model that shows how communication works and helps us to understand how we can develop self-knowledge and build deeper trust in teams and communities by sharing feedback.

Known to me   Unknown to me

JOHARI's window

Known to others — **Free**   Feedback   **Blind**

Sharing   Revelation

Unknown to others — **Hidden**   **Mystery**

The window represents the self - the whole person. The four frames of the window can be described as follows:

Free	The part of yourself which is known to you and others. It is the area of mutual sharing.
Hidden	That part of yourself which is known to you, but not shared with others. Sometimes more sharing can clear the air, build trust and make teamwork easier.
Blind	That part of you which is known to others, but unknown to you. The tone of your voice, and a talent of which you are not aware, may be in this area.
Mystery	That part of yourself that is unknown to yourself and others. Here are talents and abilities which you are unaware of and which others have never seen. But they are part of you and may one day come to the surface.
Feedback	Is one way by which others open up to you the blind areas of yourself by letting you know what they see in you which you do not see yourself.
Sharing	Is one way of opening yourself more to others.
Revelation	Is an experience during which a mysterious area of yourself is suddenly revealed. Revelation comes spontaneously. It cannot be planned.

In other words, the way we see ourselves is partly a result of what we have been told by others, how they see us. Sometimes it is even the other way around. The way we feel or behave can depend on what we think others see in us. For example:

> "I did not understand what the facilitator told us, but if I ask her to explain it to me again, she will think that I am very stupid. So I had better keep quiet."

In many cases it is very helpful to hear from others how they actually perceive you, and this can be done through feedback.

How to give feedback?

Feedback will only be effective when certain criteria are used. Following are some hints for giving constructive feedback.

Criteria	Bad example	Good example
Be specific, not general.	Your are always so talkative!	Just when we were deciding the issue, you talked so much I stopped listening.
Be descriptive, not judging	You only want to annoy me!	I feel annoyed, because you interrupt me all the time!
Receiver oriented, not giver oriented	Let me tell you...	When you are ready I would like to give you some feedback on...
Focus on behavior, not on the person	You are arrogant!	You often lifted your eyebrows when I was talking. This made it hard for met to keep talking.
Focus on the positive, not the negative	You don't smile enough..	You have a warm smile. You should use it more often. It makes me feel happy to work with you.
Ask for it but do not impose it	I am sure you want to know...	Please, tell me what you saw me do...
Well timed	Last week....	Did everybody understand the point I wanted to make?

In general don't delay feedback. It carries more weight if given soon after the observation. The person can then relate it to the specific situation.

In short try to phrase your feedback as follows:
When... (naming the specific behavior)...
        I... (description of your feeling)...
                Because... (informing effect of the behavior)...

How to receive feedback?

Feedback tells you how another person sees your actions and gives you the choice of trying to change your behavior. Even if you "disagree' with the feedback, it is important for you to hear it clearly and understand it.

Giving someone feedback is sometimes difficult. If you keep the following in mind, it will make it easier for someone else to give you feedback that you can use.

Concentrate, be observant and listen

You don't need to do anything with feedback. Simply look at the person giving you feedback and listen carefully.

Check

Wait until the feedback is given, then paraphrase the major points.	*So, what you are saying is that...*

Clarify

Ask clarifying questions or ask for examples.	*When and how did I upset you?*

Don't defend

Most of us have difficulty hearing both positive and negative things about ourselves. To cover our discomfort, we defend ourselves with quick responses. Unfortunately, valuable opportunities for self-growth are lost if you defend yourself.	*That's because...* *I think that most people...* *Yes. But...* *You got me wrong...* *Who are you to make such comments...?*

Tell your limit

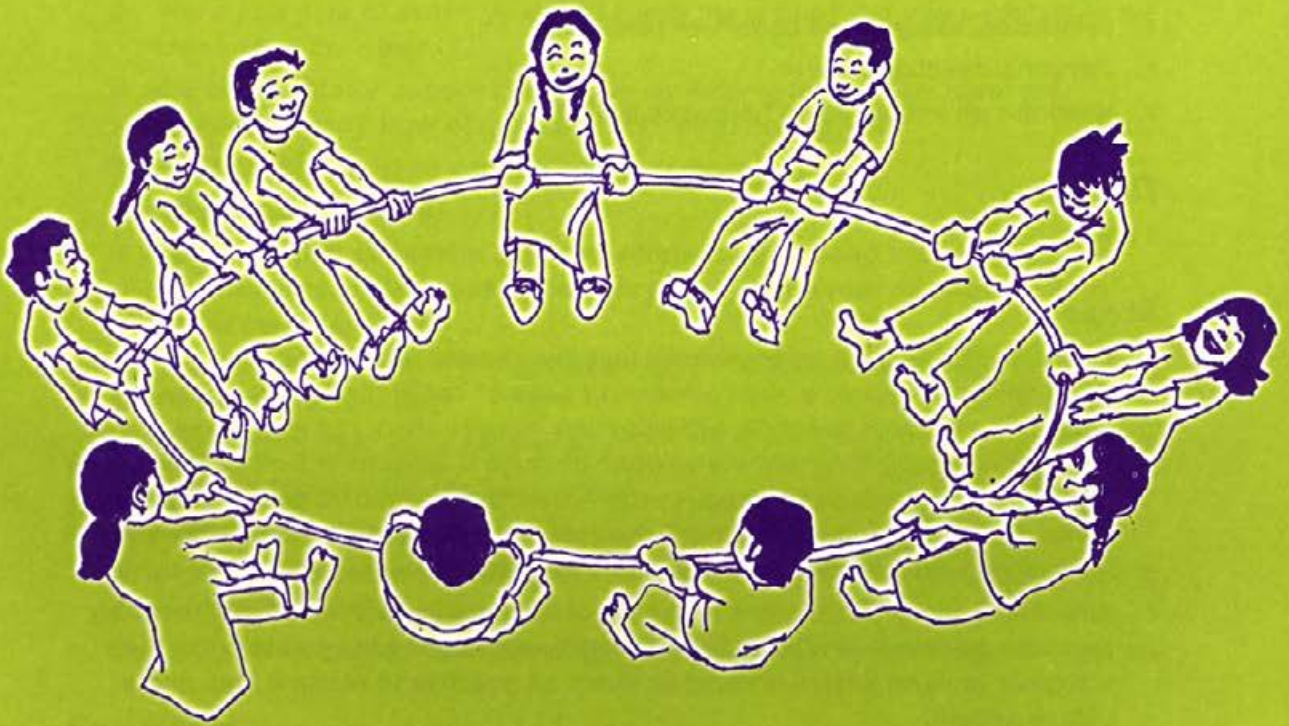|	
If the sender gets carried away and overwhelms you with suggestions, advice, or criticism, you can say that it is enough.	*I have heard enough for now. Thanks for all the helpful feedback so far.*

7. Integrating skills

- Promoting full participation
- Handling difficult group dynamics
- Handling resistance
- Fostering inclusive solutions
- Ensuring participatory decision-making

Promoting full participation

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> have improved a range of facilitation skills in idea generation through practice, participation, observation, reflection and feedback

> can identify factors which influence levels of participation in a group exercise

> can list some tips and methods to help foster confidence in a group and promote full participation

Materials

1. Facilitator, villager and observer role cards
2. Personal feedback sheet
3. Hand-out on encouraging full participation

Time

2 hours

Steps

1. Introduce the session by explaining that this session will provide the opportunity to improve and combine a range of facilitation skills in idea generation through practice, participation, observation, reflection and feedback. Explain that this will be done through a simulation exercise whereby a facilitator will attempt to engage the full participation of a group during an ideas generating activity. Refresh their memories about how to do this and ask them what type of obstacles they could expect.

2. Stress that the effectiveness of the simulation will depend on how effectively they can get into their roles. Explain that to help them get into their roles we will have to rearrange the room as much as possible to make it look like a village setting.

3. After the room has been rearranged and the facilitator selected, tell the story of the "Senang Saja" in such a dramatic way that the group can visualize themselves in this village.

4. Distribute the guidelines to the facilitator and those playing the roles of the villagers and observers. Give ten minutes for those involved to reflect on their roles and to prepare themselves.

5. After ten minutes start the exercise ensuring the facilitator understands the time allocation.

6. After fifteen minutes stop the scenario and ask the group to de-role. Generate a reflect on by asking the following questions:

    ⊚ *How did it go? How do you feel? What did you do? How did you start? What happened next? What happened in the end? (try to walk through the entire process, recalling critical moments)*

◎ *What went well? What was difficult? Why? (often people will say that it is difficult to get all ideas on the table by encouraging all group members to participate)*

◎ *What did you do to overcome this problem? What else could you have done to overcome this difficulty?*

◎ *Did the group help you or help themselves? If yes, how? Did you support the initiatives of the group? If not, why not? If yes, how?*

◎ *What could you do differently next time?*

Questions to the group members could be:

◎ *Were you able to share your ideas with the group? Did you understand the ideas of all the others?*

◎ *Did the facilitator support the group by helping them understand the gathered ideas? How did s/he do that? What helped you?*

◎ *What could s/he have done to help you more?*

Questions to all could be:

◎ *How does this simulation exercise relate to facilitating villagers or multi-stakeholders in idea generation in reality? What would be similar? What would be different?*

Ask the observers who were asked to keep a communication map to share their observations.

◎ *Who contributed the most and why?*

◎ *Who contributed the least and why?*

◎ *Did this change over time?*

7. Brainstorm with the group what tips/methods a facilitator could use in order to encourage full participation.

8. Wrap-up the session by summarizing the highlights and distributing the hand-out.

Comments

This session is very closely linked with group dynamics and brainstorming but is useful to bring out another focus of the use of methods for increasing participation and confidence.

Setting the scene

Facilitator's scenario

You are a local forest ranger and you have been working with Senang Saja Forest User Group for the last eight months. Through monthly meetings in the past you have spent time with them discussing their vision for their forest and how they would like to see it in the future. You have also established that they find it difficult to find fodder for their animals on both their farm land and in the forest.

This need has increased for many users as grazing in the forest has been stopped as the result of a new rule that had been agreed to by the users during a meeting two months ago. In a recent walk through the forest with selected members of the user group, users identified that there is some natural regeneration of some fodder species and they have expressed an interest in thinking about how they could increase regeneration of these species. The group would like to open the forest again in the future with a sustainable grazing system.

In the next monthly meeting you have the task of facilitating the users group in order to generate ideas on promoting natural regeneration of fodder species in their forest. In the past you have had some concerns that not all group members are confident to share their ideas so in this meeting you will make a special effort to hear the ideas of all the members even if it takes some time. The next meeting can be spent choosing which idea, if any, to use.

You will have 15 minutes to facilitate the above meeting in a simulation exercise. Please conduct the meeting seriously as if it was real.

Tips and considerations for the facilitator;
Take ten minutes to think about how you could approach the task;

- How will you start?
- How will you clarify the problem?
- How will you encourage the generation of many ideas?
- What will you do to ensure that everybody shares their ideas?
- What will you do to ensure that everybody understands each other ideas?
- What will you do if there are no ideas?
- What will you do if there are conflicting ideas?

Setting the scene

User's scenario

Senang Saja Forest User Group has been working with their local forest ranger for the last eight months. Through monthly meetings in the past you have spent time with him/her discussing your vision for your forest and how you would like to see it in the future. You have identified that it is very difficult to find fodder for your animals on both your farm land and in the forest.

This need has increased now for many of you as grazing in the forest has been stopped as the result of a new rule that had been agreed to by the users during a meeting two months ago. However, they would like to see the forest opened up again in the future with a sustainable grazing system.

In a recent walk through the forest with selected members of the user group, users identified that there is some natural regeneration of some fodder species and they have expressed an interest in thinking about how they could increase regeneration of these species.

At the end of the last meeting with the ranger it was decided that the next meeting would be in the forest and that those attending would try to think about as many ideas as possible to promote the regeneration of the fodder species in the forest.

You will be asked to be a user/villager for the purposes of this fifteen minute meeting simulation. Please try to get into the role of the villager and not react as yourself but as you think a villager would react.

> ### Tips to prepare for the role of being a villager;
> Take ten minutes to think about who you want to be;
> - What will be your position in the village?
> - How many livestock do you have ?
> - What are your interests in the forest? Do you agree with promoting the regeneration of fodder species ?
> - Do you already have ideas and experience? How will you share your ideas?

Role cards

Below are some suggested role cards which may be used especially in a group which finds it difficult to identify with users/villagers and have limited field experience.

Villager one

You have been a member of this user group from the start because you believe the forest should be protected so that in future the village can sell timber. You have lots of experience planting fodder species on your own land. Your main idea is to actually plant new fodder trees in the forest or even on private land and you are unconvinced that regeneration (natural forest recovery) should be the main strategy in order to address the needs of the group.

These are just some ideas. Please feel very free to generate others.

Villager two

You are a user of the forest. In the past, the main interest in the forest was to protect your grazing rights. Your main income is from your livestock as you produce milk which you sell to a middle man. You never agreed with the new rule to stop grazing in the forest as you were not there at the last meeting. However, when pushed, you have some ideas that the committee should pay some villagers to turn the soil over and weed in areas which have the highest potential for natural regeneration as you have heard that a nearby forest user group has been doing this.

These are just some ideas. Please feel very free to generate others.

Villager three

You are a user of the forest area. In the past you used to graze your goats in the forest while you were collecting mushrooms and other forest products. Now you collect fodder from another forest which is a long distance away because the new rule means you cannot lop trees in the forest where you used to lop trees before. You are very interested in the idea of promoting regeneration. You think that it would be interesting to take an area where regeneration is evident, cultivate the soil in the area and keep it clean so new seedlings have no competition when emerging. You also think a fence will be necessary because when you were in the forest recently you saw that some goats were still being let loose to graze freely, in spite of the new rule.

These are just some ideas. Please feel very free to generate others.

Villager four

You are a female user and you often go to the forest to collect fuelwood. You have some of the same species of fodder trees around your house and you have noticed that there are new seedlings (young trees) where your pig used to be tied up. You were wondering if this was because of the manure or because the pig dug over the seeds with its nose. Maybe it would be a good idea if the users bought some pigs and put them in the forest.

These are just some ideas. Please feel very free to generate others.

Villager five

You are a user and a relatively wealthy villager in the user group. You are not that interested in fodder species but really think that the forest should be managed to produce more timber. However when pushed to provide ideas you suggest buying some fertilizer to spread around the forest in the areas where regeneration is non-existent with the hope that it would also make the timber species grow quicker.

These are just some ideas. Please feel very free to generate others.

Villager six

You are an older user whose family has been using the forest as one of the main sources of fodder for your expanding goat enterprise. You have noticed that as people in the village get more money they buy more goats and there is less fodder. While walking through the forest recently you noticed that the fodder is growing where the shade from other trees is less. An idea that you have in the back of your mind is to cut down some of the other trees so there is more light but you know that the rule at the moment is no cutting of anything in the forest.

These are just some ideas. Please feel very free to generate others.

Villager seven

You are the enthusiastic young user of this group. You have recently attended a course in the city about forest management where you learnt all about forest inventory and other management techniques. You are keen to try out new things which the others are not aware of so you try to list all the modern ideas you have. This could include the idea of burning the forest floor as you have heard that this will help the germination (start the growth) of new seedlings. In your mind this would also reduce competition.

These are just some ideas. Please feel very free to generate others.

Observers guidelines

Please read the scenario provided to the facilitator

You are a local forest ranger and you have been working with Senang Saja Forest User Group for the last eight months. Through monthly meetings in the past you have spent time with them discussing their vision for their forest and how they would like to see it in the future. You have also established that they find it difficult to find fodder for their animals on both their farm land and in the forest.

This need has increased for many users as grazing in the forest has been stopped as the result of a decision taken in the meeting by the users themselves two months ago. In a recent walk through the forest with selected members of the user group, users identified that there is some natural regeneration of some fodder species and they have expressed interest to think about how they could increase regeneration of these species.

In the next monthly meeting you have the task of facilitating the users group in order to generate ideas on promoting natural regeneration of fodder species in their forest. In the past you have had some concerns that not all group members are confident enough to share their ideas so in this meeting you will make a special effort to hear the ideas of all members even if it takes some time. The next meeting can be spent choosing which idea, if any, to use.

The facilitator will have 15 minutes to facilitate the above meeting in a simulation exercise. Please conduct the meeting seriously as if it was real.

Some tips and considerations for the observer

This scenario for "micro-facilitation" has been designed in order to reflect upon, and learn about, encouraging full participation of a group. Sit with the other observers for ten minutes and think about what aspects of the situation you consider important to observe. For example you may want to consider the following:

- Pattern of communication in the group: who talks, to whom, and how often?
- Non-verbal communication in the group: gestures, eye contact, sitting arrangements
- Interventions by the facilitator: what does the facilitator do to encourage everybody to share their ideas, what does s/he do to make the ideas understood by everybody?
- Methods, tools or media used by facilitator: brainstorming, buzz-groups, white board, flip-chart, cards etc.
- Skills used by facilitator: observation, listening, paraphrasing, probing, questioning

Promoting full participation in group facilitation

Why is "full participation" an important value for group facilitation?

In a participatory group all members are encouraged to speak up and say what's on their minds. This strengthens the groups in many ways such as:

> members become braver in raising difficult issues

> members learn how to share their "first draft" ideas

> members become better at discovering and acknowledging the diversity of opinions and backgrounds in the group

Challenges for a facilitator in encouraging full participation

In many group situations especially where decisions are involved the basic problem is that people do not want to say what they are really thinking. It is often hard to take this risk and harder if the group's response is likely to be dismissive. Group norms are often oppressive.

With these type of comments around all group members will edit their thinking before they speak. People censor themselves to protect themselves.

Some Typical Comments

☐ Haven't we already covered that point?

☐ Lets keep it simple.

☐ Hurry up; time is running out!

☐ What does that have to do with anything?

☐ Impossible. Won't work. No way.

The facilitator can help by understanding when these difficulties arise in a group and takes responsibility to help others overcome it. In addition to the tips given below the facilitator must remember his/her own skills and attitudes will be very important in promoting full participation such as;

☐ Being a good listener
☐ Not judging inputs
☐ Encouraging shy people in a non-threatening way
☐ Discouraging dominance
☐ Not rushing

Some methods to help encourage full participation beyond open discussion

In some instances a change of methods can help a facilitator encourage greater participation. However, changing methods do not totally safeguard full participation therefore a combination of the previous tips and some of the methods mentioned below may be useful.
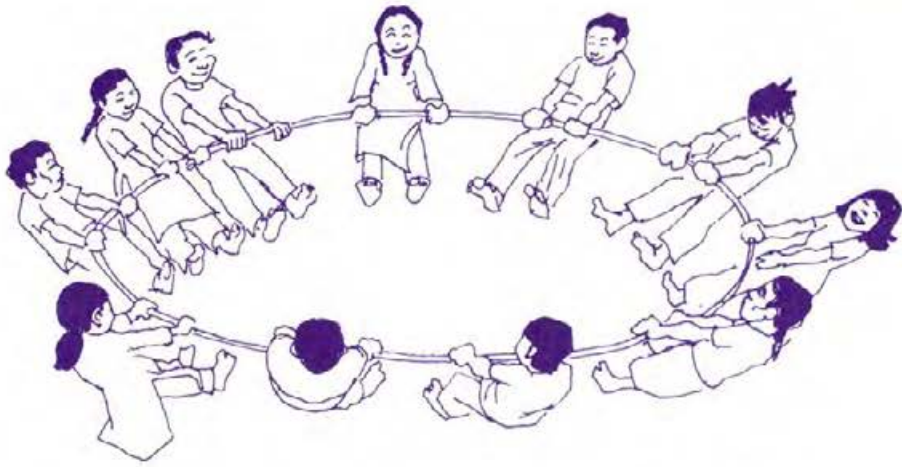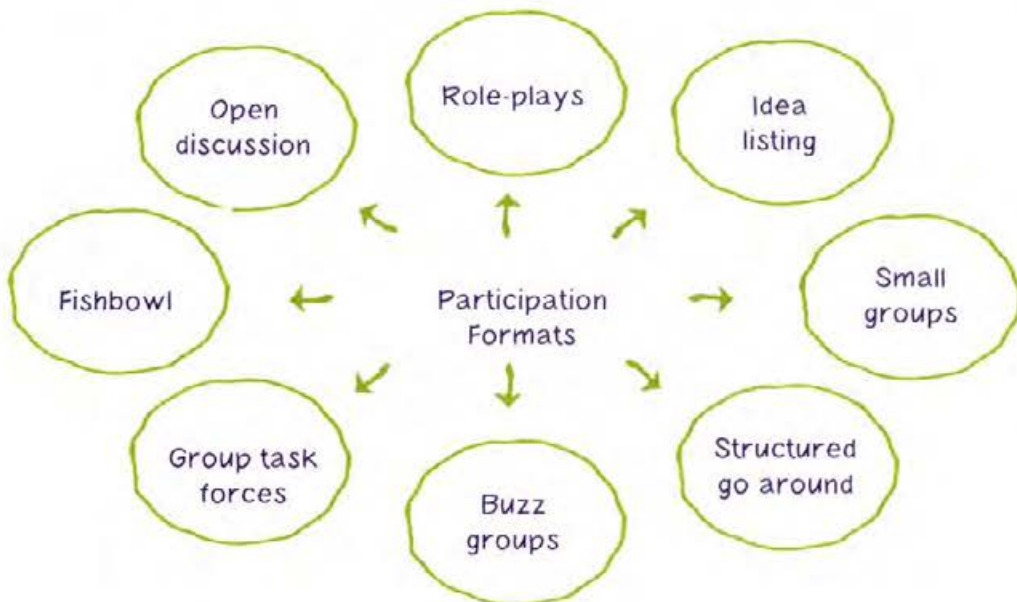
Open Discussion

Open discussion is the unstructured, conversational, familiar way of talking in groups. Open discussion can serve many purposes but often open discussions are hard to sit through and difficult to facilitate. As a field facilitator working in a variety of group situations there is the option of considering other formats to enable full participation.

Participation Formats/Methods

Tips
- draw people out and let everyone be heard
- stress that any question/comment is a good question/comment
- use ice-breakers
- make room for quiet members
- reduce the incidence of premature criticism
- support continuous thinking and prevent "shutting-down"
- create a safe environment
- facilitate creation of group norms and revisit regularly
- ask people to reflect on their level and style of participation (group feedback)

Participation Formats:
Open discussion, Role-plays, Idea listing, Fishbowl, Small groups, Group task forces, Buzz groups, Structured go around

Handling difficult group dynamics

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> have improved a range of facilitation skills needed when handling difficult group dynamics through practice, participation, observation, reflection and feedback

> can list at least ten tips for facilitating team building

> can explain possible interventions for dealing with difficult group members

Materials

1. Two sets of role-play scripts cut into slips
2. Copied hand-out

Time

2 hours and 30 minutes

Steps

1. Introduce the session, by explaining that we will practice how to deal with various difficult behaviors of group members. Explain that we will be doing this by practicing a situation in which we have to design an experiment with villagers using role-playing.

2. Explain that participants will be divided into two separate groups. Both groups will be role-playing the same situation simultaneously with a trainer observing. Each person will receive a slip with instructions for the role-play, which s/he can not share with the other members of the group. In both groups there will be one person playing the facilitator's role, while the others will play various villagers' roles.

3. Stress that the effectiveness of the role-play will depend completely on how effectively they can get into their roles. Explain that to support them we will have to rearrange the room as much as possible to make it look like a village setting.

4. After the room has been rearranged, select the facilitators, divide the participants into two groups and distribute the slips (making sure that the dominant roles are taken by naturally dominant people). Allow each group five minutes to prepare for the role-play. Extra numbers of participants can serve as observers or can be added as participants just by being themselves.

5. Start the role-play and after 15 minutes sharp stop the role-play and ask the players to de-role.

6. Get participants to reflect on the role-play by asking questions such as:

   ◎ *How did it go? How do you feel? What did you do? How did you start? What did you do next? What happened? (Try to examine the entire process, recalling critical moments.)*

◎ What went well? What was difficult? Why? (Often people will say that it is difficult encouraging everyone to participate and getting everyone's ideas on the table.)

◎ What did you do to overcome this problem? What else could you have done to overcome this difficulty?

◎ Did the group help you or help themselves? If yes, how? Did you support the initiatives of the group? If not, why not? If yes, how did you do that?

◎ What could you do differently next time?

Questions to group members could be:

◎ Were you able to share your ideas with the group? Did you understand the ideas of all the others?

◎ Did the facilitator support the group by helping them to understand the gathered ideas? How did s/he do that? What helped you?

◎ What could s/he have done to help you more?

Questions to all could be:

◎ How does this simulation exercise relate to facilitating villagers or multi-stakeholders in idea generation in reality? What would be similar? What would be different?

7. Provide your own feedback and tips for dealing with difficult group members if necessary.

8. Bring the two groups together and, based on their experiences, ask them to think of tips for preventing and handling difficult group dynamics.

9. Close the session by distributing and discussing the hand-out.

Comments

This is a good task-oriented exercise combining all previously practiced basic facilitation skills, while having to handle difficult group dynamics at the same time.

Role-play guidelines

Facilitator role-play guidelines

You are the facilitator of a villagers' group with whom you have already done a ranking of priorities. The selected issue to work on is the improvement of the management of the medicinal plants in their community forest area. The meeting you are going to facilitate with the villagers now is to design the experiment with the villagers.

The following activities are those you want to achieve during the following 30 minutes of the meeting:

1. Share one or more case histories of experiments/ observations of medicinal plants done by members of the group, discussing how they did the experiment and why they did it that way.
2. Initiate a discussion in order to decide the following points:
   Design of the experiment: Which medicinal plants will be used? What do we want to learn? What do we try out? Which variables do we want to test?
   Implementation: Where do we try it? What would be the best time? What inputs do we need?
   Monitoring and evaluation: What information do we need to collect? How do we collect this? Who will do what, and when?

Dominator role-play guidelines

You have mobilized a group of villagers to improve the management of medicinal plants in your community forest area. As you are the medicine man of the village you know the most about medicinal plants. You already thought through a number of experiments that you want the villagers to run for you. During the last meeting you realized that the facilitator does not know anything about medicinal plants. During the coming 30 minutes the facilitator will try to design the experiment with the group. As you are the expert in the matter you will take over from him or her and manipulate the group to agree with your preferences.

Special-interest pleader role-play guidelines

You are part of a villagers' group that has decided to improve the management of medicinal plants in your community forest area. You decided to join the group as you are the midwife in the village and have a special interest in one specific medicinal plant called... (think of a plant that you are familiar with) that is becoming harder and harder to find. During the coming 30 minutes the facilitator will try to design the experiment with the group. As you have a special interest in this specific plant, you will make sure that it will be included in the experiments.

Initiator role-play guidelines

You are part of a villagers' group that has decided to improve the management of medicinal plants in your community forest area. You decided to join the group because you are interested in selling medicinal plants on the market. During the coming 30 minutes the facilitator will try to design the experiment with the group. As you know the market values of most medicinal plants in the forest, you want to share all this information with the group so they will accept your idea of selecting for experimentation only those plants that fetch good prices.

Aggressor role-play guidelines

You are the wife of the village headman. You decided to join the villagers' group (which wants to improve the management of medicinal plants in your community forest area) only because you heard that the men in the group heavily dominated the last meeting. During the coming 30 minutes the facilitator will try to design the experiment with the group. You will make sure that the women's voices are heard by the group. You will strongly oppose the men who think differently.

Topic jumper role-play guidelines

You are part of a villagers' group that has decided to improve the management of your community forest area. You joined the group because you were interested in increasing mushroom production. However, during the last meeting that you missed, the more dominant people in the group steered the decision as to what plants to experiment with onto medicinal plants instead. During the coming 30 minutes the facilitator will try to design the experiment with the group. The only thing you want to do during this meeting is to convince the facilitator to acknowledge that the majority of the group is not interested in medicinal plants. You will continuously try to change the subject to mushrooms. If that does not work you will get bored listening to all the arguments, interrupting the discussion regularly.

Withdrawer role-play guidelines

You are part of a villagers' group that has decided to improve the management of medicinal plants in your community forest area. You did not really want to join the group but your father, who is too busy himself, instructed you to do so. During the coming 30 minutes the facilitator will try to design the experiment with the group. As you are not interested in what is going on, you will not participate in the discussion. You will show your disinterest by talking to your neighbor about other things, by reading a magazine or newspaper, by falling asleep or what ever you can come up with.

Opinion giver role-play guidelines

You are part of a villagers' group that has decided to improve the management of medicinal plants in your community forest area. You decided to join the group because you often collect medicinal plants that you sell to the midwife and the medicine man. During the coming 30 minutes the facilitator will try to design the experiment with the group. As you know exactly where the plants grow and why and in which season, and which ones are becoming more and more scarce, you want to share all this information with the group.

Blocker role-play guidelines

You are part of a villagers' group that has decided to improve the management of your community forest area. You joined the group because you were interested in increasing fuelwood production. However, during the last meeting that you missed, the more dominant people in the group steered the decision as to what plants to experiment with onto medicinal plants instead. During the coming 30 minutes the facilitator will try to design the experiment with the group. The only thing you want to do during this meeting is to convince the facilitator to acknowledge that the majority of the group is not interested in medicinal plants.

Recognition seeker role-play guidelines

You are part of villagers' group that has decided to improve the management of medicinal plants in your community forest area. You are the best educated villager in the group. Since the first meeting you are highly irritated by the fact that the facilitator listens as much to the uneducated people as s/he does to you! During the coming 30 minutes the facilitator will try to design the experiment with the group. This time you will make sure that the facilitator will listen to you.

Playboy role-play guidelines

You are part of villagers' group that has decided to improve the management of medicinal plants in your community forest area. You decided to join the meetings because you enjoy the beer that is served at the end of it. You find the other participants far too serious and boring. During the coming 30 minutes the facilitator will try to design the experiment with the group. As you don't really care what is decided, you try to liven up the sessions by telling jokes and stories.

Harmonizer role-play guidelines

You are part of a villagers' group that has decided to improve the management of medicinal plants in your community forest area. You decided to join the meetings because you like the idea of sharing and learning together. You find it a pity that there is so much tension in the group. You find it hard to participate in such an atmosphere. During the coming 30 minutes the facilitator will try to design the experiment with the group. You don't like arguments or disagreements, so you try to keep peace.

Tips for handling group dynamics

Tips for facilitating team building

Building team dynamics requires the effective combination of various facilitation skills such as observation, listening, diagnosing, feedback, modeling, encouraging and managing conflict. Some general tips are:

- try to get to know group members as much as possible
- agree on, and refer to, group norms
- encourage the group to remind or challenge each other when the norms agreed on collectively are not followed.
- monitor team group stages and team roles, making sure that the team progresses and the roles develop as needed.
- in case groups get stuck, diagnose the problem with the group and look for solutions collectively
- develop sensitivity in the group and share responsibility with the group
- give constructive feedback to group members about their behavior
- model norms of appropriate and expected behavior yourself
- form small groups very carefully
- counsel individuals outside the group if necessary.

Tips for managing difficult group members

What follows are the types of group members whose behavior can create difficulty in groups, and options on how to manage them.

Type and possible interventions

Silent or shy

Reward any contribution. Encourage them outside the group. Give feedback one to one. Give notice of a topic so there is time to prepare. Share time. Give time. Be patient. Invite to speak or check understanding from time to time. Place in a supportive group. Smaller groups.

The blocker

Check out reasons. Give feedback. Set and remind group norms. Give responsibility in group. Confront the behavior when it happens. Support/ reinforce other behaviors. Give time out of the group.

Aggressor

Seek causes and remove them if possible. Give feedback. Change group. Remind of group norms. Confront behavior when it happens and reinforce other behavior when it happens. Model non-aggressive alternatives. Discuss effect with whole group.

Dominator

Share time. Give feedback. Record contribution levels. Place with other similar types. Place in same group as facilitator. Shut out. Invite to become responsible for other contributions. Develop assertiveness in others.

Withdrawer

Check out reasons. Allow a role in choosing task. Offer optional work. Reinforce, encourage, support contribution. Give responsibility. Challenge if appropriate. Place with motivated peers. Accept and be patient. Constant search for involvement.

Joker

Group discussion on the use and misuse of humor. Confront behavior. Give feedback – allow time to change. Encourage other behavior.

Misfit-loner

Model acceptance. Give feedback if appropriate. Give special encouragement. Allocate special role or responsibility. Support – create opportunity for achievement.

Building the process with positive group roles

As a facilitator you should be ready to identify people who play constructive roles in a group. These people can help to balance out the difficult group members.

Type of constructive group role/character and key characteristics

Initiator
Suggests new or different ideas for discussion and approaches for problems

Opinion giver
States relevant beliefs about discussions and offers other suggestions

Builder
Builds on suggestions of others

Clarifier
Gives relevant examples, offers reasons, looks for meaning and understanding, restates problems

Tester
Raises questions to 'test out' whether the group is ready to come to a decision

Summarizer
Reviews discussion and pulls it together

Devil's advocate
Challenges the group to think critically about their ideas

Tension reliever
Uses humor or calls for a break at appropriate times

Compromiser
Gives in when necessary for progress

Harmonizer
Helps keep the peace

Encourager
Praises and supports others, friendly, encouraging

Gate Keeper
Keeps communication open, encourages participation

Handling resistance

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> can explain which procedure to follow when confronted with resistance

> can judge the risks of using certain interventions when dealing with resistance

> have improved a range of facilitation skills for dealing with resistance through practice, participation, observation, reflection and feedback

> can generate ideas on how to handle different types of resistance

Materials

1. Handling resistance model on flip-chart (see hand-out)
2. Copied hand-out
3. A series of "critical incidents" that can be acted out
4. Optional: video camera and tripod

Time

2 hours to half a day, depending on the number of "critical incidents" being practiced

Steps

1. Introduce the session by saying that probably the biggest challenge for most facilitators is dealing with resistance.

2. Clarify what resistance means. Give participants five minutes to reflect individually. Ask them to try and recall their most memorable experience where a group has resisted. If participants find it difficult recalling incidents give some examples from the training course when they showed resistance.

3. Share some of the examples from the participants' experiences in the plenary discussion. Make sure participants understand that all difficult moments are examples of resistance.

4. Choose one of the participants' examples generated by the brainstorm or explain an incident from your own experience and ask one participant how s/he would deal with that situation.

5. Draw a high-low risk graphic and ask how the participant how s/he would rate his/her intervention in terms of risk-taking, and why?

6. Ask the group for one or two other possible interventions and ask them to rate them in the same way.

7. Explain the model in which resistance can best be dealt with (see hand-out).

8. Introduce the purpose and procedure of practicing critical incidents. Ask the first volunteer to give an indication of the level of resistance s/he wants to deal with on a scale from 1 to 10 then get the volunteer to leave the room.

9. While the volunteer is outside plot a little incident which build in the requested rate of resistance. Ask the volunteer to come in and enact the incident allowing about five minutes to do this.

10. After five minutes exactly, stop the role-play and de-role. Reflect on the exercise by asking the volunteer questions such as:

- *How do you feel? Why?*
- *How did you prepare?*
- *Did you do what you planned to do?*
- *What happened? Did you expect this to happen?*
- *What else could you have done? (refer to the model of "signal-acknowledge-probe-solve" if necessary and/or check the groups' feelings and ideas)*

11. Repeat the same procedure for all participants, or for those who are willing to volunteer.

12. Brainstorm with the group on tips for handling resistance. If time is running out summarize the session by highlighting some of the tips about handling resistance and distribute the hand-out.

Comments

This session needs to be adapted to the level of experience, trust and confidence of the group. Be prepared to have some critical incidents ready in case the participants are unable to think of any.

When using the video, position it behind the facilitator and focus it on the group. Set up a tripod and try to get the whole group in the frame. After all "critical incidents" have been reflected upon include a short break (between steps ten and eleven) so you can rewind the video. Show the video to the group to reinforce the learning points that came out during the reflections.

Handling resistance

What is resistance?

Resistance, at its most obvious, may be anything from a lack of enthusiasm for following a process or making an agreement to a complete refusal to co-operate. For example, the group you work with may not be that keen to follow a new format at first or try out different methods in your meetings and group activities. They may even dismiss your ideas on participation and facilitation. They may still want a formally chaired meeting and not a facilitator! Sometimes we create resistance for ourselves and often those who refuse to change their ideas can refuse more forcefully when they see others around them supporting it enthusiastically.

Why do people resist?

When managing resistance the first question to ask yourself is why are they resisting? Different people behave in different ways for different reasons. Therefore, your ideas may encounter different types of resistance.

How to recognize resistance?

Resistance can surface in many ways depending on the culture you are working in and the group you are dealing with. In some cultures resistance may be expressed very obviously while in others the feelings may be as equally as strong but expressed in a more subtle way. The most important skill for detecting resistance at an early stage is probably through the observation of people's behavior and group dynamics.
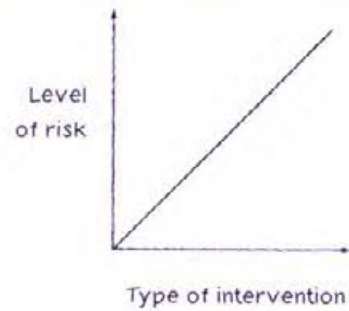
How to deal with resistance?

As a facilitator there are many strategies for intervening and dealing with resistance but different strategies will have different implications. When confronted with resistance a facilitator needs to quickly decide how to deal with it. This is only possible when you are able to put your own feelings aside as it will influence the way you react. For example if you are feeling angry with a dominant participant you may end up in a confrontational situation whereas if you take the time to put your feelings aside you will be able to deal with the feelings of the group member resisting and not be distracted by your own.

Signals to look out for

- Avoiding eye-contact
- On-going side conversations
- Distracting questions
- Physically withdrawing from the conversation
- Constant disagreement
- Repeating interruptions
- Sharing frustrations
- Rejecting suggestions or guidelines directly or indirectly
- Asking questions of which you suspect they know the answers

The next thing to do is when confronted with resistance is to ask yourself why are they resisting? Although good observation skills can help you detect whether something is brewing it is crucial to verify your observations as different people behave in different ways for different reasons. The following model may help you in dealing with resistance.

Level of risk

Type of intervention

1 Recognize the resistance

2 Put aside your own feelings

3 Detect the issue or concern

Don't jump straight to the solution!

6 Work on solution

5 Probe for better under-standing

4 Acknowledge the feelings, worries or issues

Examples:

4 "Yes, change can be worrying..."

"I understand why you may think that..."

"It is very quiet in here, can I ask is there a problem?"

5 "What is it that worries you?"

"Why do you think you feel this way?"

"How could you see this as an opportunity for you?"

6 "What can we/you do to make the change easier for you?"

"I've got some ideas, shall we talk them through?"

"How can we make this work for you?"

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Tips

Check the feeling of the whole group

Return a question to the whole group in order to gain a group opinion on the issue: "What do the rest of you think?"

Regain attention

"OK Lin, I think that is a different issue to the one we are talking about – can we leave that and come back to it?"

Use your body language

For example you can stand up, move into the middle of the room, encourage participants by arm and eye contact, or lean forward.

Use appropriate humor

Using appropriate humor will always lower the tension in a situation. However, never make a joke at the expense of someone else!

Refer to the group norms

"One of the things that we agreed on at the start of the meeting was that we should avoid side conversations. Can I ask the group if we can stick to these guidelines?"

Defer

"Can you bear with me for two more minutes until we see the summaries?

Do not ignore or avoid it

It is difficult to judge how to deal with resistance as soon as you detect it. However, realize that if you avoid or ignore resistance the situation will most likely only get worse.

Fostering inclusive solutions

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

➢ can explain the role of a facilitator for generating an inclusive solution

➢ can explain the importance of supporting the group's good ideas in order to reach an inclusive solution

➢ have generated a list of "do's and don'ts" for a facilitator when looking for inclusive solutions within a group

Materials

1. One set of egg race materials for each team (find a high place from which to throw the eggs)

2. Hand-out on inclusive solutions

Time

2 hours and 30 minutes

Steps

1. Explain the objectives of the session. These will help focus on how to work with the group in order to find inclusive solutions. This is an important skill to have as field facilitators must often help groups of farmers or users solve problems. This session therefore focuses on the convergent zone of the "diamond of decision-making".

2. Explain that in many problem solving situations (discussed in the participatory decision-making session) solutions to problems are often not generated by the whole group but are the solution of only one or two people.

3. Briefly brainstorm what an "inclusive solution" is (page 147). Ask the group why an inclusive solution is important.

4. Introduce the egg race as a problem solving exercise that is lots of fun and a helpful learning tool. Explain the instructions, divide participants into teams with one facilitator and one observer in each, then distribute the exercise hand-out to the facilitator and the observers.

5. Assemble the teams together again after exactly 30 minutes, inviting all teams to launch their eggs at the same time. After the eggs have been launched ask the groups to sit for ten minutes with their facilitator and write down on a flip-chart the steps the group took to reach a solution and analyze whether it was an inclusive solution. Give reasons for this choice.

6. After ten minutes ask the groups to post their flip-charts at the front and invite the other groups and the observers to read them.

7. While discussing the flip-charts with everyone, including observers, reflect on the exercise by asking questions such as:

◎ What are the differences in the steps taken by different groups?

◎ How did they arrive at their solution? How many ways did they look at the problem?

◎ Were any assumptions challenged? How and Why?

◎ Whose ideas were involved and why? Did they test any ideas? How?

◎ What did the facilitator do which helped and why?

◎ What did the facilitator do that hindered the process, and why?

◎ Were there any feelings of frustration? Why?

8. Invite observers to add their observations. Add your own if needed. Focus on the concept of strengthening good ideas in the group relating to examples from the egg race. Explain that strengthening good ideas is another key element for generating inclusive solutions along with reframing the problem and exploring inclusive principles (explained in earlier sessions).

9. Summarize the session by asking the group to focus on the role of the facilitator in generating inclusive solutions. Brainstorm the "do's and don'ts" for a facilitator based on the principles of inclusive solutions (see hand-out).

Comments

*This session is closely linked with the session "Practicing reframing and inclusive solutions" (page 144).

The egg race instructions

Assignment

Drop one egg down as quickly as possible without breaking it.

A prize will be awarded to the group whose solution is:
> successful,
> innovative, and
> can demonstrate they used an inclusive solution process to solve the problem.

Rules

1. The egg should fall freely and not be lowered by any means.
2. While the egg is falling down, it may not make contact with anything or anybody.
3. You may not change the composition of the egg in any way.
4. You can only use the materials provided to increase your chances of success.
5. You may run a trial but any broken eggs or burst balloons will not be replaced.

Preparation time

30 minutes

Materials

2 fresh eggs, 2 pieces of paper, 2 balloons, 2 meters of string, 1 small role of scotch tape and 1 pair of scissors.
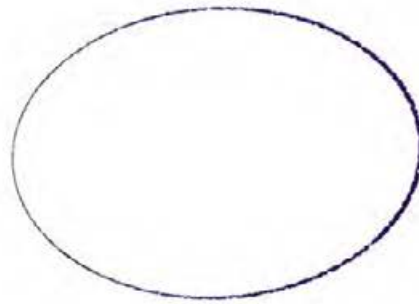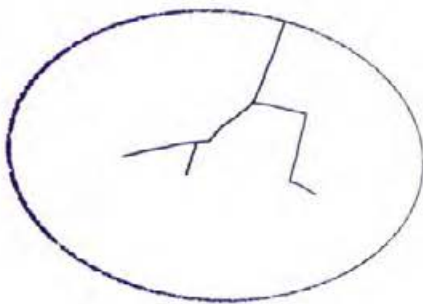
The egg race: observer guidelines

You are to observe the group and the facilitator. You must not speak or participate in the competition in any way. If you are asked to help simply say that you are not allowed to.

Carefully observe and note the following:

▣ How did the group decide how to start?

▣ Did the group test ideas? How?

▣ Were any assumptions challenged?

▣ Who participated? Who didn't?

▣ Which ideas were involved and why?

▣ Were there ideas that were ignored? Why?

▣ What did the facilitator do which helped the process? How and why?

▣ What problems or difficulties did they have? How were they tackled?

▣ What went particularly well? Why?

▣ Did the group develop an inclusive solution? Please give reasons for your answer.

Fostering inclusive solutions

Remember the three main aspects of fostering inclusive solutions

1. Exploring inclusive solutions

2. Reframing the problem

3. Strengthening good ideas

Strengthening Good Ideas

The role of the facilitator in this type of thinking is to help the group critically analyse the problem in the context of their plan. It helps the group to:

> evaluate and refine the quality and logic of their thinking,

> and it helps the group improve its ability to follow up on the decisions it makes.

Bringing such questions to the group is challenging as the facilitator still has to remain neutral and non-judgmental. In general, if groups have developed a shared framework of understanding the groups often do not need a facilitator.

Questions to help facilitators strengthen good ideas

- What resources would it take to make this work? Do we have them?
- How can we reduce the costs and risks involved?
- How would others outside this group respond to this idea?
- Who else needs to be consulted?
- Who else needs to evaluate this proposal?
- If we implement this idea who would do what and when would they do it?
- Which criteria of success does this idea meet?

Tips for facilitators
when developing inclusive solutions with groups
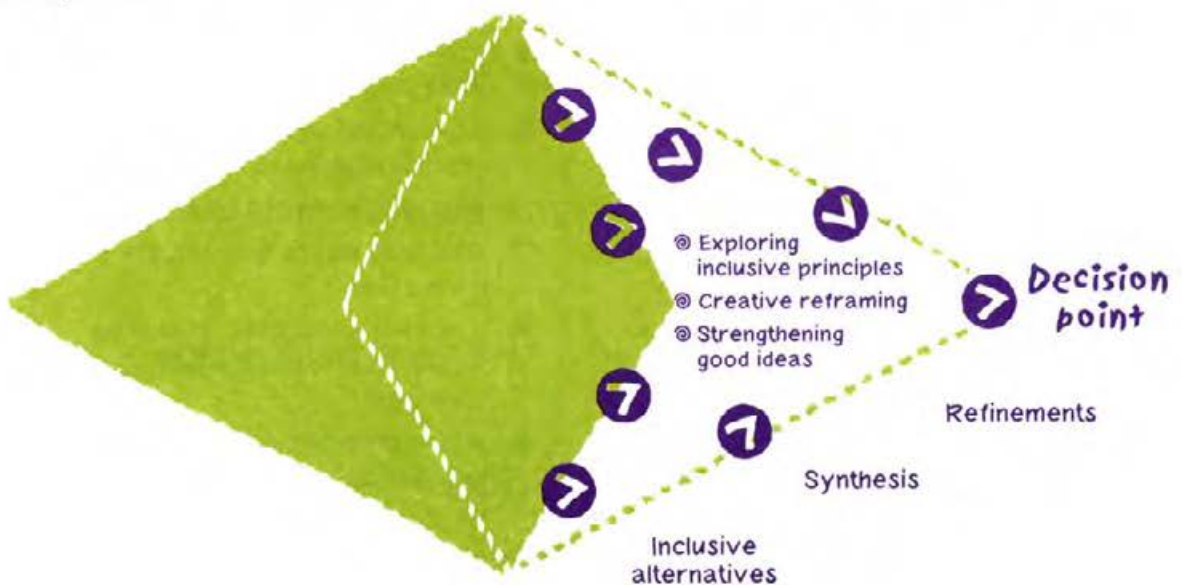
Do's

- ▣ Ensure you and the group have a good overview of all the interests at stake

- ▣ Use structured thinking activities if open discussion is not working

- ▣ Encourage the group to combine and build on elements of everybody's ideas (avoid either/or idea situations)

- ▣ Follow-up agreement on a solution with a check on who is prepared to do what

Don'ts

- ▣ Judge any of the solutions yourself

- ▣ Be afraid to break down the problem into smaller components for the group to solve

- ▣ Be seen to favor ideas of particular people

- ▣ Force a decision because of time if the solution is not inclusive but agree on tasks to help reach a decision at the next meeting

Summary of inclusive solutions

Sustainable agreements require well thought out ideas that include everyone's needs and goals. Structured thinking activities, like the ones presented, are useful when a group appears to be trapped in an either/or mentality. But don't think that groups in the convergence zone spend much time in structured thinking. The truth is the opposite. Convergent zone discussions are largely self-managing. For many facilitators, the hardest part is learning how to sit down and get out of the group's way!

- ◉ Exploring inclusive principles
- ◉ Creative reframing
- ◉ Strengthening good ideas

Decision point

Refinements

Synthesis

Inclusive alternatives

Ensuring participatory decision-making

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> have improved a range of facilitation skills for participatory decision-making through practice, participation, observation, reflection and feedback

> have reflected on common difficulties experienced in group decision-making

Materials

Role cards

Time

2 hours

Steps

1. Introduce the session by explaining that we will practice facilitating a participatory decision-making process through role-playing.

2. Explain that the participants will be divided into two separate groups. Both groups will be enacting the same situation simultaneously with a trainer observing. Each person will receive a slip with instructions for the role-play, which s/he can not share with the other members of the group. In both groups there will be one person playing the facilitator's role, while the others will play various villagers' roles.

3. Stress that the effectiveness of the role-play will depend completely on how effectively they can get into their roles. Explain that in order to do this we will have to rearrange the room as much as possible to make it look like a village setting.

4. After the room has been rearranged, select the facilitators, divide the participants into two groups and distribute the slips (making sure that the dominant roles are taken by naturally dominant people). Allow each of them five minutes to prepare for the role-play. Any participants without a role can serve as observers or can be added as participants just by being themselves.

5. After 30 minutes stop the role-play and invite the players to reflect individually for five minutes thinking about, and making notes on, the following questions:

    ◎ *What went well?*

    ◎ *What was difficult?*

    ◎ *What could have been done differently?*

6. Bring the whole group back together. Reflection on the role-plays by asking the facilitator questions such as:

    ◎ *How did it go? How do you feel? What did you do? How did you start? What did you do next? What happened? (Try to cover the entire process, recalling critical moments.)*

    ◎ *What went well? What was difficult? Why? (Often people will say that it is difficult to facilitate participatory decision-making without manipulating or guiding the outcome.)*

◎ What did you do to overcome this problem? What else could you have done to overcome this problem?

◎ Did the group help you or help themselves? If yes, how? Did you support the initiatives of the group? If not, why not? If yes, how?

◎ What could you do differently next time?

Questions to group members could be:

◎ Were you able to come to a decision within the group? If yes, what did the facilitator do to help you? If not, what hindered you or what could have helped you?

◎ Did the facilitator try to influence the decision-making process? If not, how did s/he avoid that? If yes, how did s/he do that? How did you feel about that?

◎ What could s/he have done to help you more?

Questions to everyone could be:

◎ How does this simulation exercise relate to facilitating villagers or multi stakeholders in participatory decision-making in reality? What would be similar? What would be different?

7. Wrap up the session by reviewing the participatory decision-making model and find linkages between the experience of their simulation and the stages in the diamond.

Comments

This session can be used to pull together the concepts and skills linked with each phase of the diamond. It can help provide participants with an example of the whole process of participatory decision-making.

Setting the Scene

Facilitator's Scenario

You are a field facilitator for a local NGO. You are new to working in the village of Kok Yai and have just replaced a colleague who has been sick. The villagers of Kok Yai have had a community forest for the last five years. In this time they have protected the forest and formulated some rules of use. One of these rules is that the felling of trees is not allowed. Permission is required from the village headman for this. In the first few years that the villagers protected the community forest they felled only a few trees; some with permission and some without.

Last year a main road was built linking the village to the local town. Since then villagers have noticed that trees in their community forest have been disappearing. Last week your NGO received a letter saying that two villagers had been threatened physically by an outsider when trying to prevent extraction of timber from their community forest. The villagers requested that the NGO help them to decide what to do about this problem.

You have been requested by your boss to go and meet with the villagers and help them decide what they should do next to address this problem. Your boss has stressed to you that this situation is urgent and that on return you should report to him what decision the villagers came to.

You will have 30 minutes to facilitate the above meeting in a simulation exercise. Please conduct the meeting seriously as if it was real.

Tips and considerations for the facilitator

Take ten minutes to think about how you could approach the task:

- How will you start?
- How will you make sure everybody has the same understanding of the problem?
- How will you gather together the various ideas as to how to solve the problem?
- How will you help the villagers make a concrete decision about their situation?
- What will be your role as a facilitator in the decision-making process?
- ....

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Villagers Scenario

The villagers of Kok Yai have had a community forest for the last five years. In this time they have protected the forest and formulated some rules of use. One of these rules is that the felling of trees is not allowed. Permission is required from the village headman to do so. In the first few years that the villagers protected the community forest they felled only a few trees; some with permission and some without.

Last year a main road was built linking the village to the local town. Since then villagers have noticed that trees in their community forest have been disappearing. Last week the villagers wrote a letter to a local NGO explaining that two villagers had recently been threatened physically by an outsider when trying to prevent extraction of timber from their community forest. The villagers requested that the NGO help them to decide what to do about this problem.

You will be asked to be a user/villager for the purposes of this 30 minute meeting simulation. Please try to get into the role of the villager and not react as yourself but as you think a villager would react.
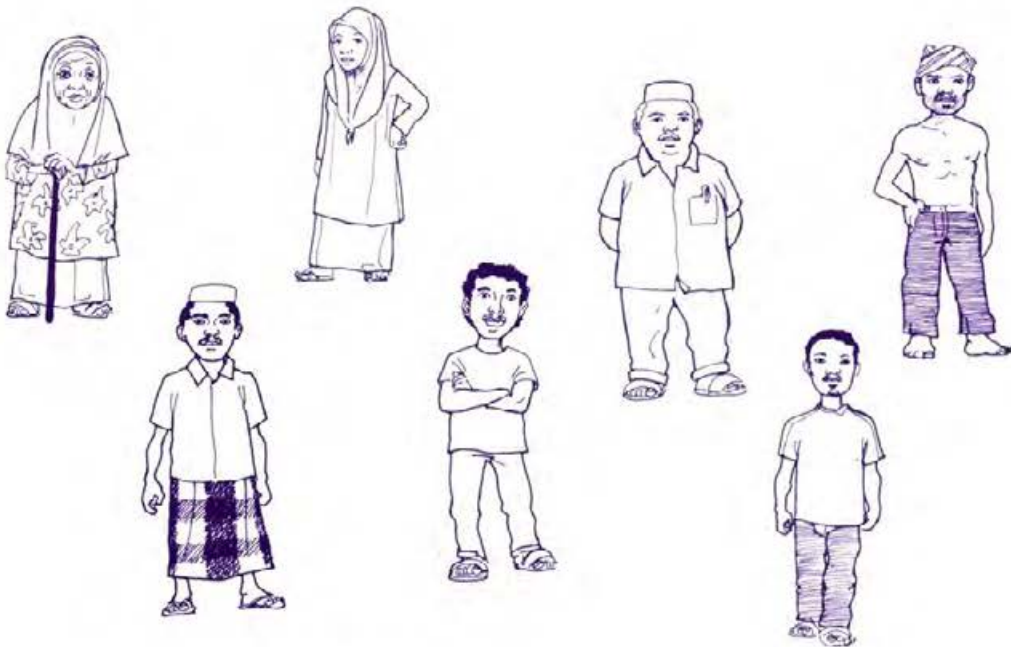
Role cards

Below are some suggested role cards which may be used especially in a group which finds it difficult to identify with users/villagers and may have limited field experience.

Villager one

You are the village headman. For the last few years your interest in the community forest has been minimal. You are not too worried about the situation as the new road has bought you many advantages. You run a small carpentry business and now you have more outside customers. Your idea is that the community should just put up more notices informing outsiders about the rules of the community forest.

These are just some ideas. Please feel very free to generate others.

Villager two

You are the chairman of the Community Forest Committee. You are one of the people who was threatened by an outsider in the forest last week. You have been thinking for a while that the users should apply for formal recognition by the local government for their community forest. You are concerned that without formal recognition from the government this problem will get worse. You are pressurizing the NGO to help you achieve this and would like them to write a letter to the local forest office supporting your community forest. Your concern is to find a long term solution and you will reject any short term solutions from the others.

These are just some ideas. Please feel very free to generate others.

Villager three

You are the wife of the Community Forest Committee chairman. You have seen many outsiders in the forest recently and you support your husband's idea to try to get a letter from the local forest office so the village can tell outsiders that the forest is just for the use of villagers from Kok Yai.

These are just some ideas. Please feel very free to generate others.

Villager four

You are a local villager who helped initiate the idea of a community forest. You don't believe that a letter from the local forest office will help. You think you know who is stealing most of the big trees and it is only a few people but led by one man. You think that all the men of the village should one night wait for the man and his pick-up and if necessary slash the tires on the pick-up and then call the police.

These are just some ideas. Please feel very free to generate others.

Villager five

You are a young man who lives in the village. You think the villagers should take the matter into their own hands and fight the outsiders.

You have lots of friends from the local town who would help too.

These are just some ideas. Please feel very free to generate others.

Villager six

You are a member of the Community Forestry Committee and you were one of the people along with the community forestry chairman who was threatened in the forest the previous week. You have a friend in the town who is a journalist and you think the villagers should take some photographs of the men and the places where trees have been cut down and then ask your friend to write an article about it in the local newspaper. You think that this will stop the man who is currently stealing the trees as he will be embarrassed.

These are just some ideas. Please feel very free to generate others.

Villager seven

You are a villager but you work every day in the town at a petrol station. You have contacts with the man who is stealing the timber as he often comes to the petrol station. In fact recently he hinted that he would give you some money if you would tell him where the best trees were. You need extra money very badly, as your mother is sick. You do not want the other villagers to know about your friendship with this man so you pretend to be very concerned about the problem. You support the village headman's idea to put up new notices to warn outsiders of the rules but you are against the other ideas as you don't want the man stealing the timber to stop coming to the forest.

These are just some ideas. Please feel very free to generate others.

Observers' guidelines

Please read the scenario provided to the facilitator below

You are a field facilitator for a local NGO. You are new to working in the village of Kok Yai and have just replaced a colleague who has been sick. The villagers of Kok Yai have had a community forest for the last five years. In this time they have protected the forest and formulated some rules of use. One of these rules is that the felling of trees is not allowed. Permission is required from the village headman for this. In the first few years that the villagers protected the community forest they only felled a few trees; some with permission and some without.

Some tips and considerations for observers

This scenario for micro-facilitation has been designed to help you reflect upon, and learn about, the dynamics and process of group decision-making. Sit with the other observers for ten minutes and think about what aspects of the situation you consider important to observe. For example you may want to consider the following:

◎ What steps did the facilitator go through to find a decision?

◎ Was a final decision made? How? Who by?

◎ What do you think were the feelings of group members during the process?

◎ ....

Last year a main road was built linking the village to the local town. Since then villagers have noticed that trees in their community forest have been disappearing. Last week your NGO received a letter saying that two villagers had been threatened physically by an outsider when trying to prevent extraction of timber from their community forest. The villagers requested that the NGO help them to decide what to do about this problem.

You have been requested by your boss to go and meet with the villagers and help them decide what they should do next to address this problem. Your boss has stressed to you that this situation is urgent and that on return you should report to him what decision the villagers came to.

The facilitator will have 30 minutes to facilitate the above meeting in a simulation exercise.

8. Optional sessions

- ◎ Monitoring your meetings
- ◎ Sharing facilitation problems
- ◎ Selecting facilitation methods
- ◎ Stranded in the bush
- ◎ Wilderness game
- ◎ Identifying application opportunities
- ◎ Facilitating change in your job
- ◎ Evaluation of learning

Monitoring your meetings

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> have challenged each other's views as to which monitoring methods used during the training course are suitable to use in a meeting and/or village context
> are prepared to organize monitoring activities in meetings they will be facilitating

Materials

Copied hand-outs

Time

1 hour and 30 minutes

Steps

1. Introduce the session by explaining that the session will reflect on the experiences of using monitoring that participants have been involved in during the course.

2. Reflect on the monitoring sessions that were held during at the end of each day during the training course by asking questions such as:
   - *What is the function of it? Why do we do it?*
   - *What was the effect? What was useful/ not useful? Why?*
   - *What did you like about it? What do you not like about it? Why?*
   - *Could you ask for feedback from farmers in a similar way? Why?*

3. Ask participants whether they have asked for feedback from villagers before at the end of their meetings or workshops and how this went.
   - *When did they do it, why and how? (Often participants structure the feedback in closed questions, not open.)*
   - *What was difficult and what was not?*
   - *Do you think the villagers could organize it themselves?*

4. Distribute the hand-outs about monitoring methods, and discuss it with participants. Ask them what methods have been used for monitoring in the training course. Follow up by asking which methods they are confident in using in the future and why.

5. Summarize the session by explaining that often monitoring is seen as a last minute affair at the end of the day by both facilitators and group members. However, monitoring can be a very powerful tool for improving group dynamics, communication and meeting design.

Comments

The best way to encourage participants to start monitoring their meetings using feedback is to provide them with a small reminder such as a small ball. This will remind them of them throwing the ball around during feedback in the training and encourage them to use a similar method on their own meetings.

Monitoring your meetings

What is monitoring?

Ending each meeting or workshop with a short (anonymous) monitoring activity provides facilitators and participants with the opportunity of assessing if everything is on track.

Why bother?

Although experienced and interactive facilitators might be able to get a general idea of the atmosphere by observing the performance of the participants, overhearing conversations and asking questions during breaks, it does not provide feedback of everyone and does not provide an opportunity to share.

A monitoring exercise enables facilitators to get an impression of the feelings and reactions of all participants as well as what they have learnt and/or hear any suggestions they may have. It helps facilitators assess whether the meeting or workshop and its results are proceeding as planned. Facilitators can then use this feedback to adjust present and future programs where possible. It also helps participants feel that their opinions and suggestions are important and that they are being "heard' by the facilitators and planners. Monitoring strengthens meeting or workshop design and increases feelings of ownership.

Who will collect, analyze and report back with the feedback?

The monitoring activity can be run by facilitators but also by the participants themselves, or a combination of both.

How to collect the feedback?

There are many different ways of collecting the feedback. The method chosen will depend on things such as the purpose of the monitoring, the type of group (e.g. degree of participation and interaction), the available time, etc. The monitoring

activity takes at least ten minutes both at the beginning and at the end of the day. It can easily go up to half an hour if you like to do the feedback orally or if you want to discuss ways of adjusting the meeting or workshop on the basis of the feedback.

Encourage participants to be specific about the *what* and analytical about the *why*. At the start of the process participants may be unfamiliar with monitoring, but as you go along and they gain more experience reflecting on what they are learning and their feelings, they will become more analytical. Therefore, –always begin the feedback with questions that are easy to respond to and gradually move towards more analytical questions.

How to analyze the feedback?
A simple way to do this is to count the number of responses relating to particular aspects of the day then summarize the responses. The count, the numbers of responses, tells both the facilitators and the participants which aspects were of greater interest to participants. A summary of the comments tells more about the reasons.

How to report the feedback back?
At the beginning of the next day present a summary of the responses and comments. Invite people to react to the outcome. If the outcome includes suggestions it is important to discuss whether the facilitators propose any changes on the basis of the feedback and either why or why not.

Do not include particularly negative or embarrassing comments directed at specific people (participants, resource persons, or facilitators). If there are a number of comments about a particular person, you may wish to discuss the issue privately with the person involved.

Ideas for monitoring methods
The following ideas can complement more informal approaches to feedback such as observation, and individual talks with participants or 'overhearing' conversations between participants. Good research design involves different methods for studying and understanding a situation. In the same way, effective monitoring should include a variety of methods for determining daily progress and moods.

These monitoring ideas rely less on the spoken word and more on creative expression. Many involve using some kind of art form to enable individuals and groups to express their ideas and feelings. Such approaches generate data, which is often complex, subtle, expressive and revealing.

Groups and individuals often struggle to answer a direct question and may simply say what the facilitator wants to hear. Using creative expression is a more indirect way of gaining information but usually results in richer, deeper, more honest and complete information.

Are we on target?

1. Preparation:
    - draw five concentric circles on a flip-chart (similar to a dart board).
    - make several pie-like divisions for the meeting or workshop aspects you wish to evaluate e.g. content, methods, facilitators, etc.
2. During feedback time, ask participants to place their pins or stickers on each pie so as to reflect their rating (the closer to the center the more impressed or satisfied they are).
3. After all participants have put their pin or sticker, invite them to take note of their general placement and investigate any pins that fall outside the general choice of position.
4. Give a summary of the results of the group.

Variations:

> If there is a certain hierarchy to the learning objectives you can write these objectives in the circle with the highest in the center. Ask participants to draw an arrow from the outside of the circle toward the center as far as they feel they have reached with their learning.

> Ask participants to add post-its to the pins or arrows with an explanation of why they placed it at that point, and/or suggestions for improvement.

Words remembered

Ask participants to write down words which:
- best describes what you have learned, or best represents the experience you have had, so far

This can be followed with questions like:
- Why did you choose these words? Can you say more about the words chosen?

Piggy bank or saving box

Make sure you have enough 10, 25, 50 and 100 cent coins available and a savings box to collect the coins in. Ask participants to select the coin that best represents their satisfaction with the day. If fully satisfied they put 100 cents into the savings box, if half satisfied they put in 50 cents etc., but they can use only one coin.

Using metaphors to capture feelings or what has been learned

Ask participants to compare the meeting or workshop with a meal and write down the meal that best represents the experience so far. Ask them why they chose this meal.

Using drawings

Ask participants to draw their feelings about the day and ask them why they drew this picture.

⊚ Feedback cards

Distribute cards or post-its. Ask participants to write a brief answer to the following:
- ⊚ What was most helpful today? Why? or
- ⊚ What was most useful, interesting, difficult? What did you like the most?

You can add questions like:
- ⊚ What was the least helpful, useful, difficult? What didn't you like?
- ⊚ What could have been improved? Any suggestions for doing this?

After the cards are collected, there are different ways for sharing the feedback.

1. If time, shuffle, redistribute and have persons read aloud.
2. Post the cards where everyone can see them. Ask participants to cluster them as they are posted up. When this has been done discuss the results.
3. Take the cards home and summarize them over night. Give the feedback in the morning.

⊚ Tossing the ball

Write a number of key questions on one sheet of paper relating to aspects you would like to monitor. Make a ball from the paper and ask participants to stand in a circle. Toss the ball around for as long as you have turned your back to them. When you turn around and call stop the person who has the ball has to open it up and answer the first question written inside. If necessary you can ask the others to add anything or offer help. Repeat the procedure until all questions are answered. As this is a rather direct way of getting feedback, be careful not to touch on sensitive issues or feelings with your questions. Rather, focus on what they have learned.

Variation: use music to signal when it is time to toss the ball and when to stop.

⊚ Complete the sentence

Display (or photocopy for each participant) open-ended sentences which are directed at those meeting or workshop aspects that you want evaluated. For example:
- ⊚ I find the meeting effective because...
- ⊚ The workshop could be improved by....
- ⊚ The facilitators could be more effective if...

You can have participants answer all the questions displayed or let them choose.

⊚ Mood meter

Prepare a mood meter sheet with a happy, neutral and sad face on it. Explain the symbols to the participants and post this sheet at the exit of the room. Ask participants to mark their mood with a sticker or a marker pen.

A variation is to use post-its on which the participants write comments in order to clarify the moods they indicate. It can be useful to use different colors for participants from different regions or institutions. This can show up sharp differences in perceptions. Take care not to break anonymity by making groups too small.

Another variation is to have a continuous mood meter for the whole length of the event and measure the moods at the end of each morning and afternoon.

Resentments and appreciation

Arrange participants in a circle, so that everyone has eye contact with each other. In turn each participant completes the sentence: *I didn't like it when...*

This may refer to anything that happened during the day. Each person may choose to say nothing or complete the sentence as many times as they think necessary. No one should pass judgment or comment on what others have said. You, as the facilitator, should begin the round and be as honest as you expect the participants to be. After everybody has answered this question, the procedure is repeated for what they appreciated. This time complete the sentence: *I liked it when...* The exercise finishes with the likes, so participants finish on a positive note.

Mural

Using symbols, group members create a mural, which represents their collective feelings or thoughts about the day. The mural should answer only one question.

Human continuum

1. Post a sign at one end of a long wall labeled 'nothing learned' and at the other end another labeled 'fully competent'.
2. Explain the continuum on the wall and ask participants to think where they were at the beginning of the meeting or workshop in terms of knowledge, comfort and skill level.
3. Ask them to stand up and place themselves on the continuum. After participants have stopped moving, ask for three or four to share why they placed themselves where they did.
4. Next ask them to think where they would place themselves now, at the end of the meeting or workshop, and to place themselves at the appropriate spot on the continuum.
5. Again ask for a few volunteers to explain why they placed themselves where they did.
6. Ask the group to value the activity, making sure to comment on its graphic nature in their self-assessment.

Poster exhibition

Write on the top of different posters aspects of the day you would like to have feedback on. Put these up and ask participants to walk around and, using a marker, write their feedback about these aspects on the posters themselves.

Fishbowl

Part of the group sits in an inner circle facing each other while others form a circle on the outside. Give them a question relating to the day's session for discussion. For example: *What were the most helpful parts of today? Why?* Only those in the inner circle can speak. Those in the outer circle listen. After a few minutes, have them change places (the inner circle people go to the outer circle and outer circle people to the inner circle). You can also change the questions being asked. If the group is large (over fifteen people) use three rounds with one group going first, then the second, then the third.

Monitoring wheel

Draw a wheel with eight spokes. Decide which eight elements of the day you would like to monitor. Along each spoke write a different element. Copy this wheel for all participants. Ask them to provide a score for each aspect (center is low, outer circle is high) and draw a dot on each spoke accordingly. The dots are then linked, so that a web is created. Post all wheels and if time permits discuss the results.

Review and rank learning objectives

Ask individuals or small groups to rank cards containing learning objectives according to how much was learnt, usefulness, etc.

Opposite scales

Choose a number of aspects you would like to receive feedback on e.g. the degree of difficulty, usefulness etc. Draw a scale for each aspect and assign scores to responses (for example, a positive score could rate a five and a negative score a one). To make the answers more useful you can add reasons why you scored responses this way, and any other comments or suggestions.

Dividing a paper

Ask participants to think about what they have learned today. Ask them to divide a blank page into sections. Each section relates to an aspect of the day which was useful to them. They should label each section accordingly and explain why. The different sizes of the sections of the page should be proportionate to the usefulness of that aspect of their learning.

Faces

Distribute this hand-out and ask participants to indicate HOW they feel at the end of the day and WHY?

How do you feel today?
Please mark the feelings that apply:

Aggressive	Anxious	Apologetic	Arrogant	Bashful
Blissful	Bored	Cautious	Cold	Confident
Curious	Determined	Disappointed	Disbelieving	Enraged
Envious	Exhausted	Frightened	Frustrated	Guilty
Happy	Horrified	Hot	Hungover	Hurt
Hysterical	Indifferent	Interested	Jealous	Lonely
Lovestruck	Negative	Regretful	Relieved	Sad
Satisfied	Surprised	Suspicious	Undecided	Other ...

Why do you feel like that?

Sharing facilitation problems

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

▷ have personally reflected and shared problems encountered in their role as facilitators of participatory groups

▷ have identified and shared possible solutions to the range of problems shared

Materials

1. Hat or bag
2. Slips or blank cards

Time

2 Hours

Steps

1. Introduce the objectives and steps of the session. Explain that in this session we will be reflecting on our own practical experiences. Emphasize that it will focus on our difficulties as facilitators supporting participatory processes in groups.

2. Ask participants to think for five to ten minutes about the main problems they experience in their work and to write them down, being as specific as possible.

3. After ten minutes ask them to choose which problem they find the most difficult to solve. Distribute the cards and ask them to clearly write the problem so that somebody else reading it can understand it. Put all the cards in a hat and mix them up. Ask participants to pull out one card each making sure they do not choose their own problem.

4. Ask participants to study the problem and think about potential solutions. Tell them they will be asked to share both the problem and the solution in the larger group in five minutes. The facilitator may need to be ready with a sample problem.

5. Ask for a volunteer to start sharing their problem and then move around the circle giving each participant a turn. After each person has a turn open up the discussion open so others can contribute. Key problems and solutions can be recorded on the white board and used for the summary at the end.

6. When summarizing the sessions try to categorize the problems that arose. Get participants to brainstorm the factors that influence our success as facilitators when working with a community. Tell participants that certain problems will be dealt with during the sessions still to come.

Comments

The problems can either be copied from the next page, or be chosen from those identified by the trainer during the training course, or can be decided on the spot by the participants themselves. If you expect participants to be shy sharing their problems, invite them to work in pairs during this session.

How to deal with...

Cut into slips and fold:

most group members trying to convince others in the group of their opinions without really trying to understand the views of the others	everybody seeming to agree very easily and quickly, but in fact only a few people have dominated the discussions and pushed this decision.
shy group members, not talking, only listening	dominating group members, talking all the time
group members challenging your credibility as a facilitator	people walking in and out of the meeting all the time
silence after raising questions or trying to brainstorm	some people not sharing their views when controversial issues are raised, and no one really knows what the opinions are from all members in the group.
facilitating through a translator, because you do not speak the local language	when people ask questions to some people in the group they react defensively.
some group members are not paying attention to the meeting, but you don't know whether they are bored, or not motivated, or... distracting side discussions by the same sub-groups	or:

Selecting facilitation methods

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> can mention at least four alternative facilitation methods to plenary discussions which can be used in a village setting

> have challenged each other's views as to which facilitation methods used during the training course are suitable to use in a meeting and/or village context

Materials

Copied hand-outs

Time

1 hour and 30 minutes

Steps

1. Ask participants what type of facilitation method they normally use during villagers' meetings. Most of them will probably describe, using different wording, unguided plenary discussions.

2. Ask them to discuss in buzz groups what the advantages and disadvantages of plenary discussions are. Gather the ideas together by giving all buzz groups the opportunity to contribute to the lists. Summarize and add your own if needed. Stress that using only plenary discussion during meetings with a lot of different type of villagers or stakeholders will make full participation really difficult.

3. Run a brainstorm with participants on what they think should be taken into account when we select a facilitation method (e.g. objectives, participants, time availability and logistics).

4. Explain that, in reality, we have to think about all these different factors at the same time. As practice, however, we will do the selection on the basis of one factor at a time. Only three factors are selected for this exercise: purpose, type of participants and types of situations.

5. Get participants to form groups and distribute slips containing the different facilitation methods and the different purposes.

6. Invite groups to order these facilitation methods according to the most suitable purpose.

7. Share and discuss the results. Prevent too lengthy discussions about details, but make sure that the overall pattern reflects the idea that many methods are suitable for sharing purposes but only a few are effective in participatory decision-making. Reflect on which methods they mainly use and what consequences this has for the expected outputs of their meetings.

8. Repeat the same procedure for the different types of target groups and situations.

9. Introduce the continuum of facilitation methods. Explain that it is not always appropriate or possible to start at the right side of the continuum, but that we should try to move gradually in that direction over time:

- *within the same method,*
- *within the same meeting or series of meetings,*
- *within your own facilitation career*
- *and within your own organization.*

10. Distribute the hand-outs.

Comments

Although it might seem obvious that the methods used during the training course are suitable for use in a farmer context, it is unlikely that most of the participants will draw this conclusion if it has not been explicitly discussed, demonstrated or practiced in the field.

Training Method selection

Cut into separate slips
Depending on purpose, target group and specific situations

Sharing ideas and opinions	Illiterate villagers
Problem solving	Field staff
Creative, innovative thinking	Village heads
Shared decision-making	Mixed group of village men and women
Team building	Multi stakeholder group from within village
Planning	Multi stakeholder group from beyond village
High stakes	Controversial topic
Being outside and it starts raining	More than 30 People
Only 1 hour available	Inexperienced facilitator

Plenary group discussion	Small group discussion
Exchange visit	Field trip
Energizers	Delphi technique
Simulation	Role-play
Case study	Puppet show
Buzz group	Story telling
Brainstorming	Quiz
Role-play	Exhibition
Assignment/ exercise	Observation
Snowballing	Personal feedback
Games	Drawing
Video	Slides/ photographs
Any other:	Any other:

Facilitation methods continuum

Facilitator centered

group centered

Lecture
guided
discussions

Brainstorming

Structured
exercises

Demonstration

Small group
discussions

Exchange visits

Self-
experimentation

Self-discovery
learning
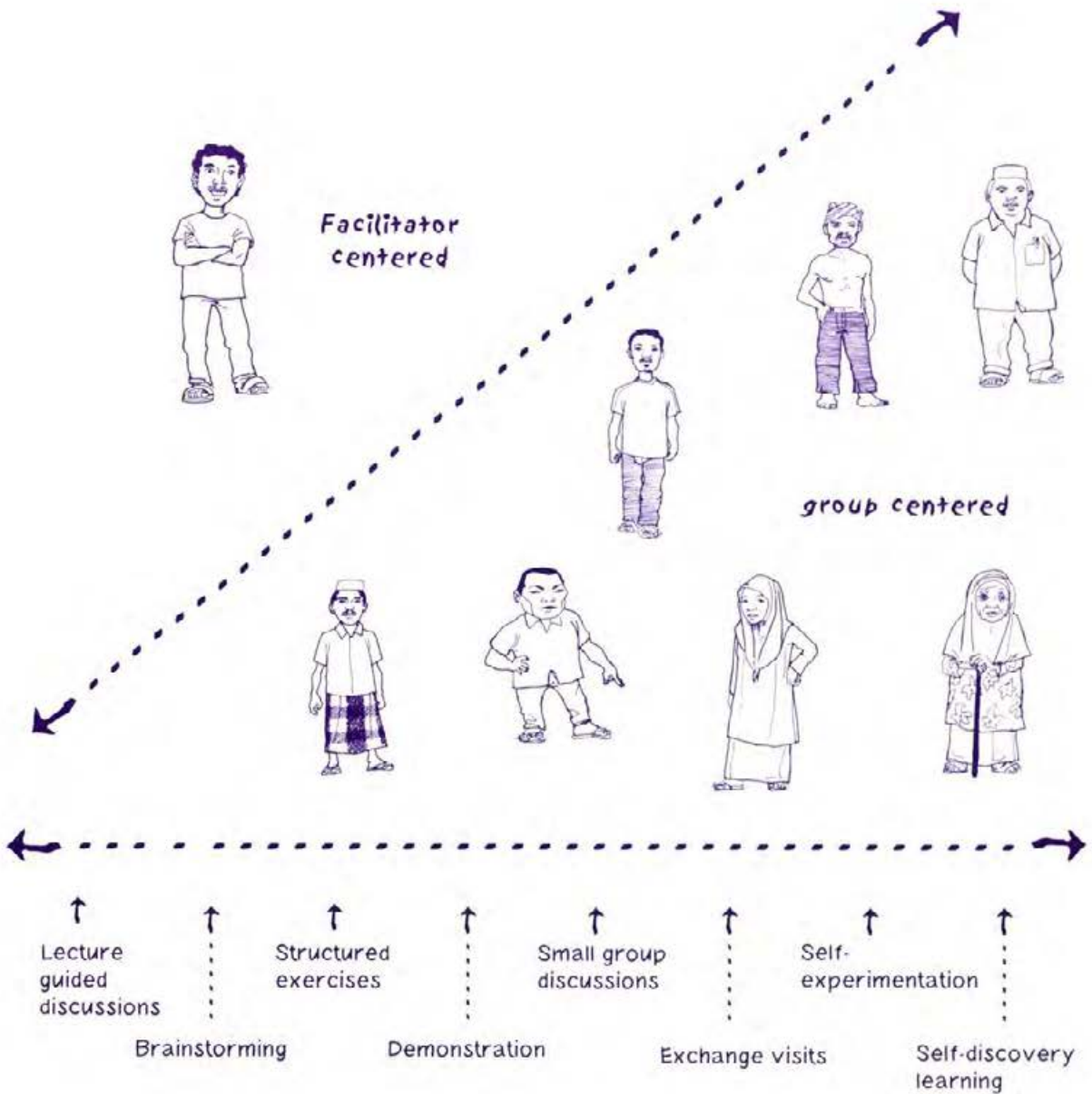
Alternative facilitation methods

To be used during village meetings and workshops

Every facilitator has her or his favorite facilitation methods, depending on personal preferences and experience. However, as facilitators, we should not select them on the basis of what we like or what we or the farmers are most comfortable with. Instead, we need to look at the purpose of the meeting. To increase participation and to ensure participatory decision-making it is essential to use a combination of facilitation methods. The next two tables give ideas about alternative methods, their purposes, expected outputs and suitable group size.

Facilitation Method	Purposes
Presentation	Introducing new ideas, topics or procedure Large number of people Limited time available
Structured plenary discussion	Exchanging opinions and ideas Problem solving, Planning Strategy formulation Decision-making Limited time available
Small group discussion	Sharing experience Exchanging ideas and opinions Problem solving, Controversial issues, Planning
Buzz groups	Providing break during plenary, to reflect, digest, and formulate Obtaining feedback Problem solving, Sharing
Brainstorming	Gathering ideas, past experiences Problem solving Creative/ innovative thinking Providing a refreshing break and creating group interest
Experimentation	Building capacity for self-learning through a structured process of trials, reflection and analysis

Facilitation Method	Purposes
Demonstration	Sharing a certain procedure
	Learning technical skills like pruning
Exchange visits	Sharing between peers
	Challenging basic assumptions through 'Seeing is believing'
Role-play	Improving interpersonal skills, communication and negotiation skills
	To bring out the human dimensions of a case study
	To encourage empathetic behavioral patterns
Energizers	Getting to know each other
	Encouraging interaction
	Enlivening sleepy or bored groups
	Stimulating creative thinking, mind cracking
	Challenging basic assumptions
	Illustrating new concepts
	Group forming,
	Team building
	Fun

Facilitating buzz-group discussions

What are buzz-groups?

A buzz-group is a small group that discusses a specific topic, issue or question for a short period of time. The room soon fills with noise as each sub-group 'buzzes' in discussion, like bees in a beehive.

Buzz-groups can be pairs or trios depending on the group size and the assignment or task.

Why and when are buzz-groups used?

During a longer plenary session, it is often useful to give participants the opportunity to exchange their thoughts and opinions with their neighbors. People often engage in side conversations by themselves. Unstructured conversations, however, are often not constructive as they distract the rest of the group. By contrast, organized buzz-groups have many advantages.

They provide a safer environment to:

> digest the content of a presentation

> exchange ideas

> express opinions

> draw on their own experiences and link these to the discussion

> reflect on what they have learnt

> think about how they might apply it in their work

It allows you as a trainer to:

> draw your breath

> energize people

> assess participants' experiences

> assess participants' understanding

> gather feedback from the whole group instead of only a few people

> encourage shy people in a non-threatening way

How to facilitate buzz-group discussions

1. Explain the purpose and procedure

The main obstacle when using buzz sessions is that people are not familiar with them and it can take time motivating them to pull up their chair and start "buzzing". However as soon as they try it and realize that it can provide them with an opportunity for contributing they will move into buzz groups very quickly. When you form buzz-groups for the first time, you will need to explain the purpose and procedure to the group.

For example: *I would like to hear what you think and I want to do this in buzz groups. Has anybody heard of buzz groups? (If so, ask him or her to explain) You will sit in small groups and discuss the same issue or question together. The noise that will be generated in the room is like that of bees in a beehive - buzzzzzz... This way everybody will be heard, firstly in the small group, then by reporting back afterwards. How does that sound?*

2. Forming buzz-groups

Ask participants to pick up their chair and turn to others sitting nearby to form groups. Give specific directions such as: *'Turn to two people sitting closest to you'* or *'Get together with somebody from the same project area'* or *'This time I would like you to pair up with the person you know the least'.*

3. Describe the task

The task must be something that can be done in five to ten minutes. If it is more complicated, divide it up into parts and deal with each part in turn. Write the task in clear language on the board or flip-chart. Leave it there throughout the discussion.

4. Specify the time limit

Time restraints help groups focus on the task. Before the "buzzing" starts let everyone know how much time is available for the task.

5. Monitor progress

Circulate from group to group as they are buzzing. This is not a time to relax. It is important you monitor the group's process, helping to clarify the task, and helping those participants that are blocked, etc. However, take care not to interfere too much.

6. Act as time keeper

Time does fly when buzz groups get together. By calling out 'two minutes left' you help the groups by reminding everyone to share the time.

7. Invite groups to report back

If you are working with just a handful of groups, the simplest way is to ask each group to report in turn. If there is only limited time ask them to call out ideas or answers randomly.

8. Process the output

If you want people's input, you need to acknowledge their contributions and then summarize, analyze or build upon them.

Facilitating the sharing of small group work

Why share small group work?

Sharing of small group work serves purposes such as the following:

> Groups can learn from the ideas of the other groups
> Groups like to share and show (off) what they have achieved
> Groups can receive feedback from the trainer or the other groups

All these are important, but they can be conflicting. Sometimes groups are so proud of their outcome that their main purpose is to show off to the other groups as though they are cleverer. In this situation the teams will not be particularly receptive for other (possibly better) ideas or be able to receive (constructive) feedback from the other groups. Instead they will react defensively when the other groups try to introduce something. It is therefore the task of the trainer to create an open atmosphere in which groups feel safe inviting others to give feedback.

Is presentation of small group work always needed?

The most common way of sharing small group work is through a presentation by one person from each group, which is sometimes just by reading out what has been recorded on a flip-chart. In many cases these reporting sessions can be quite boring especially if the groups were assigned the same task.

It is not always necessary to share small group work this was, though, but it is important to acknowledge the group's efforts and share this with the other participants in one way or another. What follows are some alternative ways of sharing small group work.

Alternative ways of sharing small group work

Cream off the top. Not all groups need to report individually, only those who have something new to contribute. This reduces repetition and encourages enthusiastic participation the next time you ask participants to work in groups.

Ranking. If the task involves list making, ask the groups to collect their ideas, and then rank the items in some order – by importance or urgency for example. Ranking the list simplifies it and makes it easier to share.

One point at a time. Get group reporters to report only one point per turn. This avoids situations where the first group reports the bulk of the information, preventing the others from contributing.

Comparing. If given the same assignment ask groups to display their outputs side by side. No presentations are necessary. Ask groups to read the displays, looking for similarities and differences etc.

Rotating feedback. Ask groups to display their outputs in different corners of the room. Ask each group initially to stand in their own corner, and then rotate the groups until each group has seen all the other groups' outputs. Ask them to write questions or give constructive feedback either directly on the flip-chart or on separate post-its pasted on the flip-chart. After participants have had time to check other lists, they return to their own.

Spinning wheel. Reverse the flow of information. Instead of asking the whole group to move around the displays, get participants to move from one display to the other. Ask that one member stay behind and act as interpreter. After participants have had time to check the other lists, they return to their own.

Tips for sharing by display

Preparation

> Inform everybody before they set off into their small groups that they will not share the outcome in presentation form but by displaying their output. Explain the purpose and procedure of this.

> Stress that the flip-charts need to be self-explanatory and well written. It will help if you have an example of a flip-chart prepared in advance to show them what to do.

Physical set-up of the display

> If the aim of sharing is mainly for comparing, ask them to display their outputs side by side with those of the other groups then invite each group to read the displays, looking for similarities and differences.

> If the aim of sharing is to learn from each other's inputs or ideas display the outputs in different corners of the room and invite groups to rotate until each group has seen all the other group's outputs.

Facilitating participants' feedback

> The most effective learning takes place among peer groups. Encouraging participants to analyze each other's outputs is therefore a powerful learning method. However, most participants might not be used to this and may expect the trainer to assume this role by her/himself. You will need to explain why you prefer them to think first before you give your feedback. Eventually they will most likely realize themselves that it is more fun to be more actively involved.

> If participants are not used to giving constructive feedback it may be necessary to spend some time on the purpose of, and ways of giving and receiving, feedback.

Wrapping up the display

> When all groups have presented their feedback and read the feedback on their work from the others, make another round with the whole group, discussing the main feedback points. Add your own feedback only when necessary.

> Ask people to summarize the main lessons learned from the exercise. Congratulate them for their hard work and constructive feedback (if appropriate).

Facilitating fishbowl discussions

What is a fishbowl discussion?

The word fishbowl is related to the way the chairs are arranged (in two circles). The people sitting in the inner circle are the fish who are allowed to talk, discuss and share. The people sitting in the outer circle observe and listen to the discussion of the 'fish'. Often one or two chairs are kept empty for observers to jump in the 'fishbowl' if they want to add a point or question to the on-going discussion. However as s/he is not a real fish, the person has to jump out of the fishbowl after making the point.

Why and when to use the fishbowl method when organizing a plenary discussion?

Discussions in which all participants are supposed to participate are often hard for a facilitator to control. Shy people will hide behind the group and big talkers are unaware, or do not care, that they are dominating. The fishbowl method,

because of the physical set-up, helps everybody monitor their own contributions in a playful but effective way. The method is suitable for a variety of purposes, but is especially appropriate during reflection or sharing exercises such as:

> sharing field experiences
> dealing with remaining questions,
> as a way of doing the daily monitoring.

How to prepare for a fishbowl discussion?

1. Prepare a number of topics or discussion points beforehand for each new round of "fish".

2. Explain the purpose of the discussion. Explain why you are using the fishbowl method. Explain the method.

3. Invite people to stand up and arrange their chairs in such a way that an inner circle (one third or quarter of the chairs) and an outer circle (the rest) is formed, both facing inwards.

4. Invite (for some purposes pre-selected) people to become fish and to take their places in the inner circle. At least one chair should stay empty.

5. Invite the others to take their place in the outer circle.

How to facilitate a fishbowl discussion?

1. Introduce the first topic, question or issue to be discussed and ask the fish to do so for 5, 10 or 15 minutes (you can ask for a volunteer to write down the most important discussion points).

2. Discourage people in the outer circle from talking. If they want to talk they should take their place on the empty chair, but leave the chair as soon as they have made their point in order to make room for somebody else. (As a facilitator you can either become a fish if you think the discussion needs continuous guidance, or you can become a fish temporarily at crucial moments.)

3. Change fish each time you change the topic of discussion to ensure all participants get the chance to participate as a 'fish'.

4. Finish by summarizing the main points of discussion.

Stranded in the bush

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> have experienced and reflected on common difficulties experienced in group decision-making
> can explain different types of decision-making rules
> can explain what happens when these rules are not clarified

Materials

1. Copied exercise sheet and exercise key
2. Copied hand-out

Time

2 hours

Steps

1. Introduce the session by explaining that we will practice facilitating the participatory decision-making process through a simulation. Quickly brainstorm the different models of decision-making (the chairman making the decision, consensus, majority vote, flipping a coin) asking examples for each.
2. Tell the story of being stranded in the bush (written on the exercise sheet) to the group.
3. Distribute the exercise sheet and invite participants to prioritize the list of items. Allow ten minutes.
4. Form teams of four to six people and invite them to do the exercise again. Stress that while each member's former decision should be considered, the final decision should be based on consensus. Allow about 30 minutes.
5. When the teams have finished their task, distribute the exercise key and ask the groups to compare their results with the solution. Congratulate the team which came closest to the solution. Stress that the solution is disputable, as we know too little about the situation. What is more interesting is how they arrived at their decisions.
6. Get participants to reflect on the simulation by asking questions such as:
    ◎   *How did it go? How do you feel? What did you do? What happened? What went well? What was difficult? Why? (often people will say that it is difficult to reach consensus)*
    ◎   *Were you able to come to an agreement everybody felt comfortable with? If yes, how did you do this? Was anybody trying to facilitate the group? If yes, how? If not, what hindered you or what could have helped you?*
    ◎   *What could you do differently next time?*
7. Summarize main points and distribute the hand-out.

Stranded in the bush: practicing participatory decision-making

Once upon a time...

On a bus journey through a very remote area, your bus has a break down. The distance to the next place where you can get help is about a two day's walk away. You are the only one who would be able to make it to the village, as the others cannot walk that far, but they have enough food and water to stay behind and wait for help. Your life, and the lives of your fellow travelers, depends on what you choose to take for the walk. You can choose 16 things to take.

Prioritize the following items. Number the most important item 1, the second most important item 2, and so on. The object that seems to be of least importance in this situation will be given the number 16.
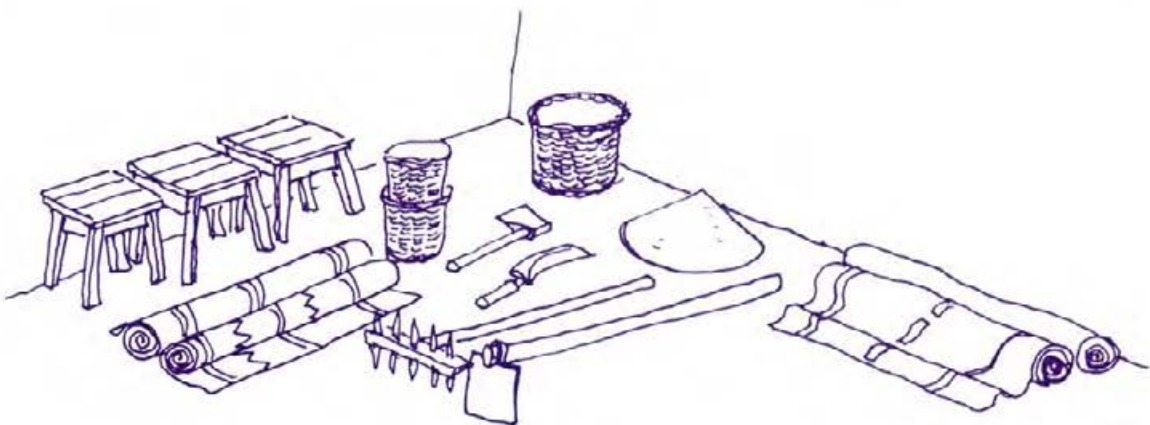
Items to choose from	My guess	Team guess	Solution
A radio			
A fiction book			
A book on eatable plants in the bush			
A 10-kg bag of rice			
A camera			
Money			
A blanket			
10 packs of dried meat			
Matches			
10 liters of water			
A torch			
First-aid case with most important medicines			
A watch			
A rope			
Instant milk			
A map			

Key for 'stranded in the bush'

Items to choose from	Solution	Explanation
A radio	13	Tells you about rescue efforts from outside
A fiction book	16	Has no direct use
A book on eatable plants in the bush	6	Food-supply
A 10-kg bag of rice	10	You would need hot water and a pot
A camera	15	To show your trip
Money	14	Just in case
A blanket	8	It might get cold
10 packs of dried meat	5	Light food
Matches	3	To start a fire
10 liters of water	1	Drinking water
A torch	12	To give light in the dark
First-aid case with most important medicines	7	In case of an accident etc.
A watch	9	Can be used as a compass
A rope	11	Can be used in difficult terrain
Instant milk	4	A light food if there is water
A map	2	For orientation

Common decision-making rules and issues

Majority vote

Unanimous agreement or consensus

Delegation

Common Decision Rules

Chairman decides without discussion

"Flip a coin"

Chairman decides after discussion
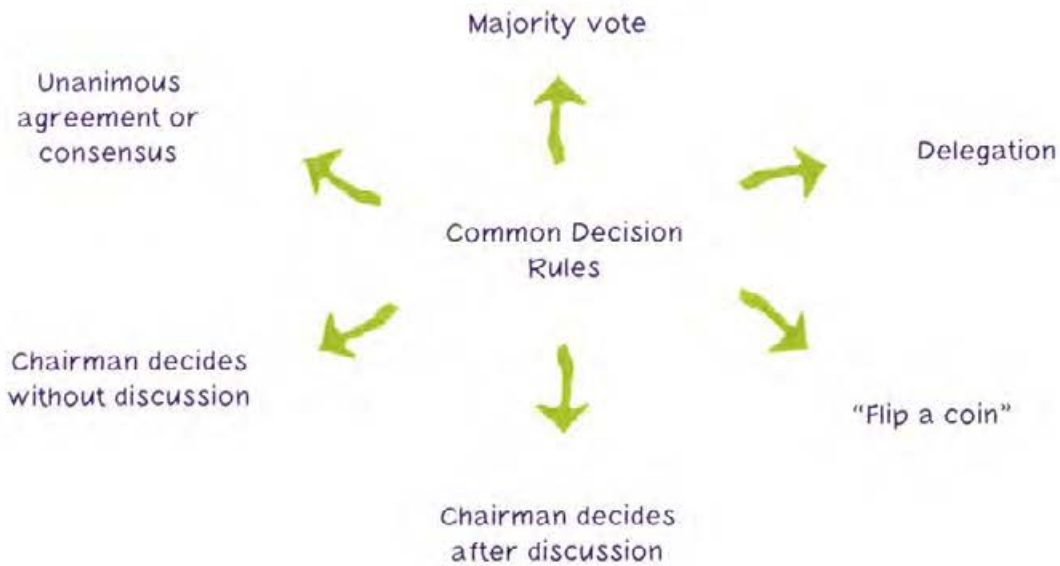
A decision rule is a mechanism that answers the question "How do we know when we have made a decision?". Each of the six rules shown provides a different answer to that question.

The most talkative get what they want

Some people hold on to rigid, fixed positions and try to sabotage the discussion

After the meeting ends, without agreement, a few people meet behind closed doors and make the real decision

The person who has the most at stake makes an independent decision

Decision-making without a decision rule

The meeting goes overtime; the discussion drags on and on...

Just as time runs out, someone makes a new suggestion. This becomes the 'decision'

Conservative members stall the discussion by vetoing it. Thus no decision becomes a decision not to act

Wilderness game

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> have experienced and reflected on common difficulties experienced in group decision-making

> can generate ideas to be considered by the facilitator during participatory decision-making

Materials

1. Copied exercise sheet and exercise key
2. Copied hand-out

Time

2 hours

Steps

1. Introduce the session by explaining that we will practice facilitating the participatory decision-making process using a fun activity.

2. Tell the story of being stranded in the bush (written on the exercise sheet) to the group.

3. Distribute the exercise sheet and invite participants to prioritize the list of items. Allow ten minutes.

4. Form teams of four to six people and invite them to do the exercise again. Stress that while each member's former decision should be considered, the final decision should be based on consensus. Allow about 30 minutes.

5. When the teams have finished their exercise, distribute the exercise key and ask the groups to compare their results with the solution. Congratulate the team which came closest to the solution. Stress that the solution is disputable, as we know too little about the situation. What is more interesting is how they arrived at their decisions.

6. Get participants to reflect on the simulation by asking questions such as:

   ◎ *How did it go? How do you feel? What did you do? How did you start? What next? What happened? (try to walk through the entire process, recalling critical moments)*

   ◎ *What went well? What was difficult? Why? (often people will say that it is difficult to reach consensus)*

   ◎ *What did you do to overcome this problem? What else could you have done to overcome this difficulty?*

   ◎ *Were you able to come to an agreement everybody felt comfortable with? If yes, how did you do this?*

   ◎ *Was anybody trying to facilitate the group? If yes, how? If not, what hindered you or what could have helped you?*

◎ *What could you do differently next time?*

◎ *How could a facilitator have supported this process?*

7. Ask participants to go back to their original groups, and write on the flip-chart which points need to be considered in participatory decision-making. Allow about 15 minutes.

8. Display the flip-charts of all groups and compare the results.

9. Summarize main points and distribute the hand-out.

Comments

This energizer can be used to highlight the different aspects of participatory decision-making such as:

▣ the importance of common understanding and reasoning

▣ the influence of time limitations on the type and quality of decision-making processes

▣ the value of different perspectives, based on different experiences and background

▣ the role of a facilitator

Wilderness game: practicing participatory decision-making

Once upon a time...

During a holiday in the northwest of the United States, you decide to go tracking with a group of five people. You are in the spurs of the Rocky Mountains, close to the Canadian border. This is very rough, mountainous terrain with very few inhabitants.

At a certain point some group members grow very tired and it is decided to rest for half a day at the site where they spend the night. However, you are not feeling tired and decide to go hiking on your own but agree with the group to be back before lunch. Because of the type of terrain, you take a backpack with you with camping equipment. Although the days are still warm and dry at the start of October, the nights are beginning to turn cold. You wander off quite far and on the way back to the camp you get lost...

First part

Try to imagine yourself in this situation then answer the questions on the next page. Imagine you are alone, and that you are only going to carry minimal equipment. Your task is to choose the best of three given alternatives. If you are not sure of the answer put a question mark. You only have five minutes to answer the six questions.

Second part

The second task is to review your answers in your small group. The group will have to make a participatory decision through consensus. All group members have to feel comfortable with the eventual choice. Imagine that, together, you are one person who can only make one decision. Take into account the expertise of group members when making the decision.

Only one alternative for each question is right. Your life depends on each of the decisions made. Try to survive!

Questions

	My guess	Team guess
1. You are lost in a forest with stony ground, and cannot see any trace of footsteps. You do not have any special means to signal your group. What is the best way to make contact with the group:		
a. scream loud, but in a low voice		
b. scream as loud as you can		
c. whistle as loud and shrilly as possible		

Questions	My guess	team guess

2. There are many snakes in this area. What is the best way to avoid them:
  a. create as much noise as possible with your feet while walking
  b. walk as silently as possible
  c. walk at night		

3. You are getting hungry. The best way to find out whether plants are edible (apart from those known to you), is to:
  a. eat what birds eat
  b. eat everything, apart from the plants with brilliant red currants
  c. place a piece of the plant on your lower lip for about five minutes. If everything seems fine after that time, you can try to eat it in small quantities.		

4. Your water is finished and you grow very thirsty. You arrive at a dried up river bed. The best way to find water with your spade is:
  a. dig in a couple of places in the river bed
  b. dig near the roots of plants and trees along the riverside
  c. dig at the outside of a river bend		

5. At night you sleep in a small tent designed for a single person. You light a small stove because it is extremely cold. Danger is lurking when the flame of the stove:
  a. turns yellow
  b. turns blue
  c. turns red		

6. You have to cross a river that has a strong current, scattered rocks and places where the water has turned white from foam. After you have identified the place to cross you must:
  a. keep your boots and your backpack on
  b. take off both your boots and backpack and carry them in your arms
  c. take off your backpack and carry it in your arms, but leave your boots on.		

Key for 'Wilderness game'

Practicing participatory decision-making key

Below are the recommended solutions for each of the situations from the wilderness game. These answers originate from an extensive survival course, delivered by Interpretive Service, Monroe County (New York) Parks Department. These guidelines show how to best cope with these situations in general. However, it is possible that, under specific conditions, other solutions are preferable.

Solution

1. (a) Scream loudly, but in a low voice.

Low tones carry further, especially in dense forests. The chances that you are heard are much better when you call out loudly, but in a low voice. The word "help" is a good word to use, as it tells those who might listen what you need. Just screaming is not only less effective it might also be interpreted as animal sounds by those far away.

2. (a) Create as much noise as possible with your feet while walking.

Snakes are afraid of people and will generally try to escape from you. Unless you corner a snake, it is highly unlikely that you will ever even see one, let alone come into contact with them. However, if you are walking without making any sound, you may step on one accidentally. Some snakes forage in the dark.

3. (c) Place a piece of the plant on your lower lip for about five minutes. If everything seems to be fine after this time, you can try to eat it in small quantities.

The safest option is, of course, only to eat what you are familiar with. But if you are starving and in doubt, you can use this test. If the plant is poisonous you will feel an unpleasant sensation on your lower lip. Red currants tell little about the edibility of a plant (unless you recognized the plant).

4. (c) Dig at the outside of a river bend.

This is the place where the river flows the fastest and has the least sedimentation. It is the deepest spot of the river and will dry-up last.

5. (a) Turns yellow.

A yellow flame indicates incomplete combustion and a high likelihood of the formation of carbon monoxide. Every year many campers die from carbon monoxide poisoning while they are sleeping in tents or small cottages.

6. (a) Keep your boots and your backpack on.

Mistakes during river crossing are an important cause of death. Sharp rocks or slippery surfaces require you to keep your boots on. If the backpack is well balanced, it will help you keep your balance in a strong current. A waterproof, zipped-up backpack normally floats, even when it is filled up with camping equipment. Your backpack can serve as a life-vest if you go under.

Points to be considered during participatory decision-making

> Each group member should understand the problem as a whole.

> Each group member needs to understand how to contribute towards the solution of the problem.

> Each person should be aware of the expertise and the potential contributions that could be made by the other group members.

> Groups that work together cooperatively are more likely to be effective than those whose members ignore each other.

> People come from different working environments and different types of organizations. This greatly influences the way they work together. Check please

> Working together involves not only the actual work but the interactions between group members as well.

The participatory decision-making process is more likely to be effective, and group members are more likely to work well together, if the atmosphere is open and relaxed.
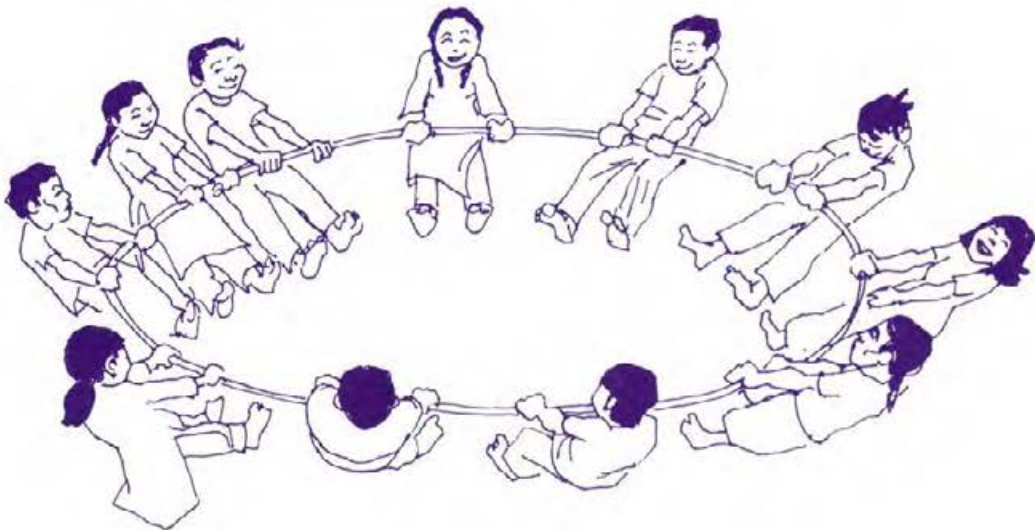
Identifying application opportunities

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> have assessed their strengths and weaknesses concerning the facilitation skills they have practiced during the course
> have prepared what they will do to strengthen facilitation skills in their jobs, and how they will do this
> have identified and shared their first opportunity for practicing their new skills

Materials

Copies of skills assessment and action plans

Time

30 minutes

Steps

1. Revisit the course flow and the facilitation skills that have been introduced in the course. Explain that session will help us to think how we can apply and improve those skills in jobs.
2. Ask when they think will be the earliest opportunity to use their skills back home. Ask a couple of participants to share with the group.
3. Explain that the purpose of this session will be to identify which skills they want to practice back in their jobs and what opportunities do so.
4. Invite participants to go through their notes from the course and reflect on lessons learned. Ask participants would like to share with the group
5. Distribute the self-assessment form and ask participants to take some time to fill it in.
6. After they completed the form, distribute the action list. Explain that this will help them to think and prepare on how to improve their facilitation skills in the future after the course.
7. Run a quick brainstorm on possible situations and events to practice facilitation (not only during training but also in meetings, workshops, small group work, working with colleagues etc.).
8. Provide some time for each participant to complete the action list and encourage them to be as specific as possible.
9. Ask everyone to find a partner and informally share their action plan with at least one other person in the group.

Comments

This session is most appropriate when used at the end of the course in order to let participants think about the ways they can make use of what they have learned from the course.

Self-assessment form

Explanation

The table below lists a variety of facilitation skills. Read each skill and reflect on how much you think you have mastered it. Rank yourself from 1 (=poor) to 5 (=highly skilled). Then rank yourself how you wish to be, keeping in mind the type of activities you will have to facilitate.

Scoring:

1 = poor   2= little idea   3= some idea   4= skilled   5= highly skilled

Facilitation skill	Before	Now	Want
1. Listening carefully			
2. Observing actively			
3. Asking different types of questions			
4. Paraphrasing			
5. Probing			
6. Supporting people's reflection			
7. Supporting people's analysis			
8. Giving constructive feedback to individuals			
9. Giving constructive feedback to a group			
10. Ensuring full participation			
11. Promoting ideas generation			
12. Encouraging mutual understanding			
13. Fostering inclusive solutions			
14. Supporting participatory decision-making			
15. Handling a group where there is conflict			
16. Handling resistance			
17. Encouraging team building			

Action list

Practicing facilitation skills in my job

Complete this action list, using the results of your self-assessment form. Try to single out at least three skills you would like to practice in your job. Write down all the possible opportunities down during which you will be able to practice these skills. Try to be as specific as possible. The more specific you are, the greater the chances will be that you will actually remember them when it is needed.

This is what I want to practice: (ideas, insights, methods, tricks or skills)	This is how I will practice: (opportunities)	This is the earliest opportunity to practice (dates)
1.		
2.		
3.		

Facilitating change in your job

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

▷ have identified the positive and negative forces which will support and constrain them when using their skills to facilitate participatory processes within their organizations and working environments

▷ have identified strategies to maximize positive forces and minimize negative forces which will help them achieve their vision for the future

▷ have reflected on issues that arise when facilitating "change" and how it may affect them when they return to their jobs after this course

▷ have identified and shared tips for dealing with resistance to change and considered its application in their workplace

Materials

1. Flip-chart with examples of force field analysis
2. Copied exercise and hand-outs

Time

2 hours

Steps

1. Explain that this session is one of the steps which contributes to a participant's action planning process. It will help them think about how they will use their skills more widely on return to their organizations and identify what might stop them from doing this.

2. Start the session with an energizer focusing on change. Ask participants to stand in a circle and face a partner. After observing their partners ask participants to turn back around and change three things about their appearance and then turn around again. Repeat the exercise three times.

3. Reflect on the exercise asking participants how they felt? Build on this by identifying some of the learning points such as the way different people react differently to change. Many people instinctively believe change means "loss" rather than "gain" (how many people picked something up during the exercise). Change is easier as "a team" rather than individually but many people still isolate themselves in situations of change.

4. Ask participants if they can link this to their own working environments. Focus on how many people work in organizations where some people feel uncomfortable with the concept, and process, of participation. Quickly brainstorm with participants why people resist "participation" (e.g. loss of face, loss of power, unfamiliarity with the idea and methods often used, some see it as a new fad etc.).

5. Explain to participants that the next exercise will help them think and share ideas about how they can become an agent of "change" and facilitate participatory processes more widely in their own organization. Ask if anybody has had any experience using the tool "force field analysis".

6. Introduce the force field analysis exercise (see hand-out) and divide participants into pairs explaining that they should at first work individually. They can then share their results with their partner with the aim of sharpening their analysis skills with the help of their partner's probing.

7. Explain the force field analysis in five steps.

    ◎ First ask participants to characterize their current situation (how participatory is your organization now and how does it work?).

    ◎ Ask them to articulate their vision based on some of the values and ideas that have been introduced in the course for their organization or team (whichever is most appropriate).

    ◎ Ask them to identify forces that will help them move from the current reality to the vision and those forces which may prevent them from doing this, being as specific as possible.

    ◎ From an analysis of these forces ask them to identify strategies that will help them achieve their vision based on maximizing the positive forces and minimizing or "reversing" the constraining forces.

    ◎ Building on the analysis above, ask them to identify concrete activities they can do to move towards their vision or dream.

8. Form groups of six and ask them to share their flip-charts. Ask each group to summarize the challenges of change that arose in their group. In a column next to the challenges ask the group to brainstorm for tips on "facilitating change" from both personal experience and ideas!

9. Ask all the groups to display their flip-charts then invite them to walk around the gallery.

10. Finish the session by pointing out some concrete strategies and actions that were identified by participants themselves to move things forward in their organizations or teams.

Force field analysis

exercise

Draw the following picture on a flip-chart and use the tool to analyze how to move your current reality towards your vision for the future!!

What is the current reality in your organization/team in institutionalizing participatory processes?

Driving forces
What or who will help?

Restraining forces
What will hinder or prevent?

_____   → ↓ ←   _____
_____   _____
_____   → ↓ ←   _____
_____   _____
_____   → ↓ ←   _____
_____   _____
_____   → ↓ ←   _____

What is your vision or dream for institutionalizing participatory processes in your team/organization?

What could *you* do to make this vision or dream come true building on driving forces and dealing with restraining forces?

1.
_____

2.
_____

3.
_____

4.
_____

5.
_____

6.
_____

Facilitating change: participatory values in your work environment

Why is change difficult to facilitate?

Even if you agree that there is a need to think and act more in your team/organization/community on the basis of participatory values never assume that others will immediately agree with you. For example you may have genuine intentions of sharing your ideas and new skills with others in your team and organization but they may show resistance.

Participatory values:
- Full Participation
- Fostering Mutual Understanding
- Inclusive solutions
- Shared

What is resistance?

Resistance, at its most obvious, is a very slow response to meet an agreement or a complete refusal to co-operate with change. For example, your team mates or the farmers you work with may at first not be that keen to follow a new format or try out different methods in your meetings and group activities. They may even dismiss your ideas on participation and facilitation. They may still want a formally chaired meeting and not a facilitator! Sometimes we create resistance for ourselves and often those who refuse to change their ideas can refuse more forcefully when they see others around them supporting it enthusiastically.

Reasons people may resist the value of participation?

- Fear of losing their job
- Fear of losing power
- Uncomfortable with the concept of "transparent" decision-making
- Increased workload; easier and quicker to be non-participatory
- Strong belief that the current non-participatory mode of operating is successful; why change?
- Lack of belief in participation; based on previous negative experiences-don't believe it is attainable
- Confused about what participation is and what it means for them?
- Lack of confidence in whoever is introducing the idea of participation
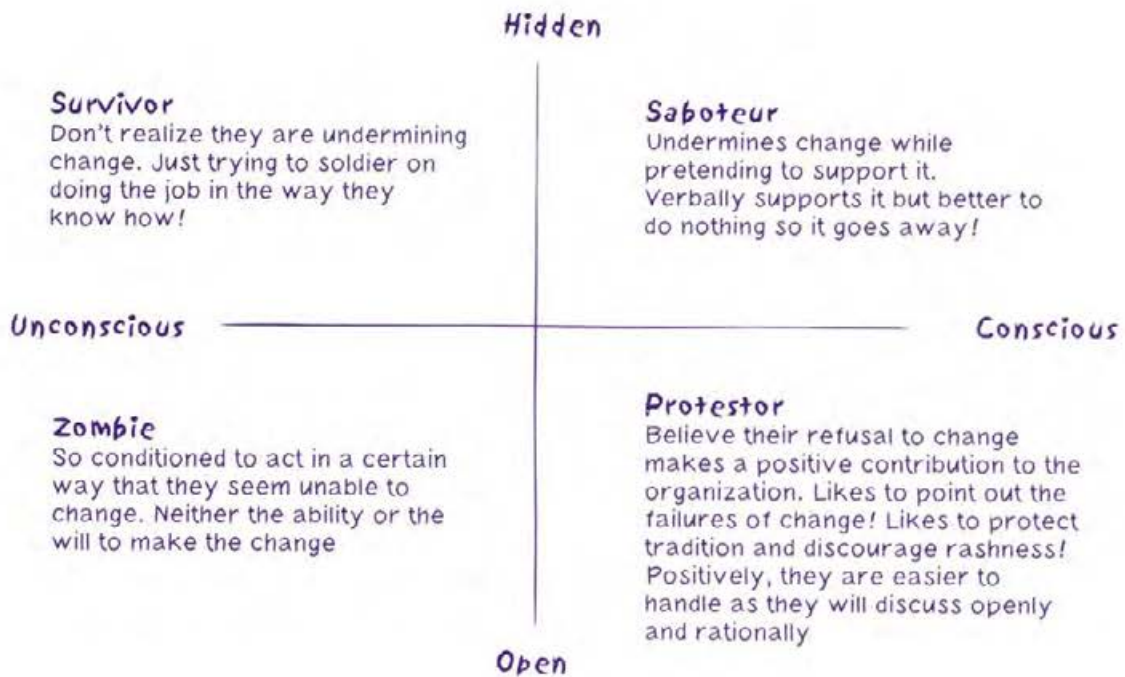- Has heard so many different perceptions

Why do people resist?

When managing resistance the first question to ask yourself is why are people resisting? Different people behave in different ways for different reasons. Therefore, you may encounter different types of resistance against your ideas.

How to deal with resistance?

You might be able to identify the reasons for resistance through probing and by observing different people's behavior. Some of the reasons for resistance will obviously be easier to address than others.

For example, if people are resisting because they see it as an unattainable goal for the whole organization you could suggest to them to just try it out in your team meetings. If people are confused about the concept or see it as a fad, try to plan how you could let them experience the benefits of participation themselves. They can then reflect on it while building on their experience.

> It works just fine now!
> Just another fad!
> Never know what they want!
> More work!!

Hidden

Survivor
Don't realize they are undermining change. Just trying to soldier on doing the job in the way they know how!

Saboteur
Undermines change while pretending to support it. Verbally supports it but better to do nothing so it goes away!

Unconscious ———————————————— Conscious

Zombie
So conditioned to act in a certain way that they seem unable to change. Neither the ability or the will to make the change

Protestor
Believe their refusal to change makes a positive contribution to the organization. Likes to point out the failures of change! Likes to protect tradition and discourage rashness! Positively, they are easier to handle as they will discuss openly and rationally

Open

The resistance quadrant
The resistance quadrant may help you understand different types of resistance behavior in your colleagues or boss. For example, if you identify that the behavior is mainly unconscious then you should avoid accusation and help colleagues develop an awareness of their own behavior and the reasons behind it. On the other hand, conscious overt behavior can be managed by encouraging debate, leading to dialogue.

Five diagnostic questions to help you:

▣ Do people realize there is a serious need for change and why?

▣ Does everyone see the need in the same way?

▣ Is there a common agreement of the end goal?

▣ Does everyone believe the goal is attainable?

▣ Is there confidence in the facilitator of change?

Personal strategies for handling resistance

Use this table to record your own ideas and the ideas of others from the force field analysis sessions. Keep adding your own ideas and you will both learn more and gain more experience!

When I return to my job and encounter resistance to my ideas and values on participation and facilitation I will not...	When I encounter resistance to participation and facilitation I will...
▣ accuse people without understanding why they are resisting the idea ▣ not punish or gang up against the person or people involved in the resistance ▣ give up ▣ Add your own...	▣ creatively find opportunities to initiate dialogue with those who resist the idea openly ▣ initiate opportunities for people to experience the benefits of facilitation in a participatory group ▣ Add your own...

Evaluating learning

Objectives

At the end of the session participants...

> have reflected on their own understanding and perceptions of different aspects of facilitation that were covered in the course

At the end of the session trainers...

> have received feedback on how many participants have developed or changed their ideas on facilitation during the course

Materials

1. Overhead sheet or flip-chart with written statements
2. Yes/No signs for the wall

Time

1 hour and 30 minutes for about six statements

Steps

1. Introduce the objectives and steps of the session. Explain that this session will get participants to reflect on how they currently think about facilitation and why. It will also be an opportunity to share with others their understanding and to reflect on what we have learnt during the course.
2. Ask all participants to stand up and clear away the chairs in the room as you will need the space. Explain to participants that the trainer will read out and display a series of statements. Each statement will be read out one at a time.
3. After one statement is read out participants are asked to consider it then decide whether they agree or disagree with the statement, then stand in position accordingly.
4. Each group should then discuss amongst themselves as to why they are standing in that position and be ready to be challenged by the other group.
5. Carry out this process for the range of statements.
6. In plenary ask participants how they felt about the session and what they learned. Ask participants if they would have given a different answer at the beginning of the course and link this with the session "what is facilitation" and its definitions. Start them thinking as to how they can apply what they have learnt when they go back to their jobs.
7. Use this opportunity to give a brief summary of the main flow of the training program.

Comments

Through facilitation ensure that the diversity of opinions of all those standing in one place is considered in the discussion. Although they may all be standing on YES it may be for very different reasons.

It may be useful to keep a record of the numbers of participants standing at yes/no, for evaluation purposes and for trainers to think about.

Trainers may have to be ready to take a position too!

Statements about facilitation[1]

- ◎ A facilitator plays the most important role in ensuring participation in a group

- ◎ Anyone can be a facilitator if they have been nominated and agreed to by the group members

- ◎ It is more important that a facilitator encourages everybody to speak than to reach a final decision

- ◎ A facilitator should never give their opinion. They should only manage the process

- ◎ It does not matter if different group members do not agree with each other as long as the facilitator understands the different ideas in the group

- ◎ With the help of a facilitator an effective solution can always be reached even if some members do not understand why it is the most appropriate solution

- ◎ Probing is the only facilitation skill which can help promote mutual understanding in a group

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1. *Select those statements or develop your own, that will bring out the points the participants struggled most with during your training program*

9. Annex
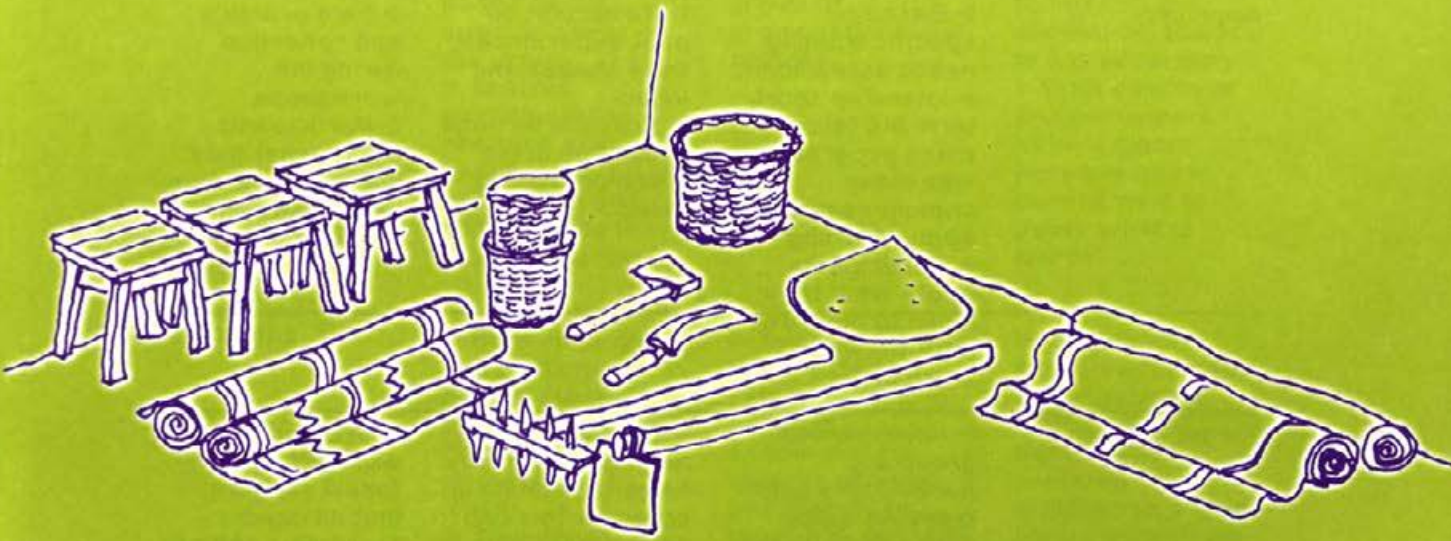
- Different training scenarios
- Facilitating simulation in the classroom
- List of facilitation resources
- Glossary

Different training scenarios

	Scenario 1: Two three day workshops with on-the-job application	Scenario 2: Two weeks in a row, simulation/ classroom based	Scenario 3: Longer term capacity building process
Duration	▷ Activities spread over 1 or 2 months	▷ 2 weeks	▷ Activities spread over 4 months to a year
Concept	▷ Type of course that can be done as a short staff retreat	▷ One-off event in a classroom setting	▷ Series of 2 to 3 workshops, total of about 20 days
Approach	▷ Based on specific training needs assessment ▷ Intensive short-term but tailor-made program with clear commitment to apply learning ▷ Participants apply what they learn to their own jobs, between workshops	▷ Reflection on past experiences, case studies and video ▷ Practice through simulation in the classroom using video	▷ Field practice and reflection during the workshops ▷ Participants apply what they learn to their own jobs, between workshops
Target group	▷ Homogenous group e.g. participants come from the same office or have the same job ▷ Managers, for example, who, like District Forest Officers, cannot afford more time away from the job	▷ Diverse audience who only have facilitating in common This can relate to training, education, research, management and/ or field work	▷ Group of field workers, like forest rangers, that all need facilitation skills to guide villagers through a specific process
Expected outputs	▷ Improved understanding of the importance of facilitation in their jobs or their staff's jobs ▷ Improved selected skills in a particular job context	▷ Awareness of their strengths and weaknesses as a facilitator and a readiness to practice new tools and techniques in their jobs	▷ Ability to apply facilitation skills to a specific process on the job

	Scenario 1: Two three day workshops with on-the-job application	Scenario 2: Two weeks in a row, simulation/ classroom based	Scenario 3: Longer term capacity building process
Opportunities	▷ Accessible for more senior staff that may only be free for up to 3 days at the time ▷ Can be very focused as the group is homogenous and the workshop is based on the specific needs of the group ▷ Enables participants to prepare and practice on the job and reflect and share during the next workshop	▷ Easy to plan as it is a one-off commitment for both organizers and participants ▷ Suitable for creating awareness about facilitation among a much wider group of organizations and sectors	▷ Strong link between facilitation skills and application ▷ Enables participants to practice on the job and reflect afterwards ▷ Enables trainers to build on their facilitation abilities in a gradual way ▷ Both employer and participant have a clear purpose and a commitment to apply what is learnt
Limitations	▷ Both employer and participant have a clear purpose and a commitment to apply what is learnt ▷ Sometimes difficult to select or mobilize a homogenous group of participants ▷ Requires good training needs assessment so as to make such a short training event effective ▷ Suitable for relatively small groups	▷ The context of the course is rather generic in order to accommodate diverse groups and therefore harder to link with application opportunities ▷ In most cases there is no specific commitment from either employer or participant to apply what is learnt	▷ Very labor intensive for both the organizers, trainers and participants involved ▷ Requires a long-term commitment from all parties involved

Scenario 1: Two three day workshops with on-the-job application

First workshop

	Day One	Day Two	Day Three
AM	▣ Greetings, expectations and introduction to the workshop ▣ What is facilitation?	▣ Benchmarking facilitation ▣ Assessing facilitation skills	▣ Introducing divergent thinking using brainstorming ▣ Facilitating full participation
PM	▣ Skills of a facilitator ▣ Role of a facilitator	▣ Practicing being content neutral ▣ Introducing participatory decision-making model	▣ Action Plans for on-the-job practice ▣ Evaluation

By the end of the first workshop participants...
➢ have identified the value of facilitation and its applications in their own job
➢ have specified key facilitation skills needing improvement in order to do their job more effectively
➢ can explain the process and challenges of participatory decision-making processes
➢ have developed an action plan that identifies how to practice new skills in their own work situation

Second workshop

	Day One	Day Two	Day Three
AM	▣ Warming-up, expectations and introduction to the workshop ▣ Sharing on-the-job experiences	▣ Introducing the concept of inclusive solutions ▣ Fostering inclusive solutions	▣ Handling resistance
PM	▣ Introducing the groan zone ▣ Introducing convergent thinking	▣ Ensuring participatory decision-making ▣ Problem Hat: sharing problems faced during on-the-job practice	▣ Action Plans for on-the-job application ▣ Evaluation

By the end of the second workshop participants...
➢ have reflected and shared their on-the-job experiences and problems in applying their facilitation skills
➢ have practiced facilitating all phases of the participatory decision-making process
➢ have practiced how to deal with resistance
➢ have developed an action plan that identifies how to apply their new insights and new skills to their own work situation

Scenario 2: Two weeks in a row in classroom with simulations and video

Flow and expected outputs of the two weeks in a row exercise; implemented in the classroom making use of simulations and video.

Example of international training course held at various times in Bangkok, due to language problems no field practice included but intensive simulation exercises built in.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
First week	@ Arrival of participants	@ Setting the context @ What is facilitation? @ Skills of a facilitator	@ Levels and values of participation @ Role of facilitator @ Benchmarking facilitation	@ Attitude of a facilitator @ Practicing listening @ Practicing probing @ Practicing observation as a tool for being a process guide	@ Practicing being content neutral @ Introducing the participatory decision-making model @ Introducing feedback	@ Introducing divergence using brainstorming @ Facilitating full participation @ Evening: social event	@ Free day @ Departure of participants
Second week	@ Free day	@ Introducing the groan zone @ Practicing paraphrasing and dialogue	@ Handling difficult group dynamics @ Introducing convergence @ Introducing the concept of inclusive solutions @ Fostering inclusive solutions	@ Practicing tracking and looking for common ground @ Ensuring participatory decision-making	@ Handling resistance @ Open forum: based on specific requests	@ Individual Action Planning @ Force field analysis @ Course evaluation @ Certification @ Party	

By the end of the course participants...
> can identify the value of facilitation and its applications for community forestry in their own contexts
> can explain the concept of facilitating participatory decision-making and identify the key skills needed to facilitate diverse interest groups
> have practiced a wide range of facilitation skills
> have developed an individual action plan that identifies how skills can be applied and improved in their own work situation

Scenario 3: Long term capacity building process

Flow and expected outputs of the long-term capacity building process

Examples of the series of workshops conducted in Nepal to introduce the Forest Management Learning Group (FMLG) process to field workers. A facilitation module to enhance the facilitation capacities of the field workers is integrated into the curriculum (printed in italics).

First Workshop (12 days)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
First week	@ Opening @ Introduction of participants @ Workshop introduction @ Group Norms / Setting Expectations @ FMLG Approach and Previous FMLG experiences	*@ How adults learn* *@ Facilitator role* *@ Need for facilitation in FMLG* *@ Facilitators skills*	@ Introducing FMLG key concepts *@ Practicing listening* *@ Practicing questioning* *@ Practicing observing*	*@ Introducing facilitation methods* @ Introducing steps 1 and 2 @ Preparing for the field visit in field teams	@ Field day implementing step 1 & 2 @ Preparing for sharing	@ Sharing and reflecting on field trip experiences @ Steps *@ Facilitation* *@ Practicing facilitation methods*
Second week	*@ Practicing Probing* *@ Practicing dialogue* @ Introducing step 3 and 4 @ Preparing steps 3 and 4 for the field	@ Field day @ Implementing steps 3 and 4 @ Preparing for sharing	@ Sharing and reflecting on field trip experiences @ Steps *@ Facilitation* *@ Facilitation methods* @ Wrap-up @ Introduce and prepare steps 5 and 6 for the field	@ Field day @ Implementing steps 5 and 6 @ Preparing for sharing	@ Sharing & reflecting on field trip experience @ Steps *@ Facilitation* *@ Facilitation skills self assessment and action planning*	@ Action planning @ Workshop evaluation and closure

By the end of the workshop participants...

> have practiced basic facilitation skills in the classroom and in the field with farmers
> have practiced the main steps of the FMLG process
> have made an action plan to test and implement a FMLG with users in their own district
> have made an action plan to practice and improve their facilitation skills while implementing the FMLG

Second Workshop (3 days)

	Day One	Day two	Day three
AM	◎ Greetings, expectations and introduction to the workshop ◎ Warm-up (statements about the FMLG approach and the facilitator's role) ◎ Reflection on the overall implementation of a FMLG using their own experiences	◎ *"Problem Hat" on facilitation skills* ◎ *Revisit facilitation self- assessment* ◎ *Facilitating farmers' reflections*	◎ Revisiting the approach (SWOT) ◎ Where is development still needed and how could this be supported ◎ *Identifying other facilitation skills needed in the future*
PM	◎ Group reflection exercise focusing on the points identified for sharing in the last workshop (e.g. problems arising in site identification)	◎ *Facilitating Farmers' analyses* ◎ Identifying and sharing personal action points	◎ Action plans of all parties

By the end of the workshop participants...

➢ have shared their perceptions about the role of the FMLG and facilitation in community forestry in Nepal

➢ have reflected on their experiences of implementing a FMLG in their own district

➢ have identified the problems encountered, and shared possible solutions, which could be used in implementing the approach again

➢ can explain at least two advanced facilitation skills which may help them in the later stages of the FMLG approach

➢ have identified and shared personal and project action points with respect to the adaptation of a FMLG in the future.

Third Workshop (3 days)

	Day One	Day Two	Day Three
AM	◎ Greetings, expectations and introduction to the workshop	◎ Field visit: How do farmers develop indicators? How do they analyze experiments? How do they share results?	◎ Facilitating difficult group dynamics ◎ Sharing mechanisms between the FMLG learning group and FUG (forest user group) members
PM	◎ Warm up on facilitation skills ◎ Presentation (by participant or by team) of their FMLG experience ◎ Scientific versus farmers' experimentation ◎ Observing changes, indicators, and record keeping	◎ Reflection from field visit ◎ Reflection on silvicultural practices applied	◎ What will you do differently? ◎ Reflecting on the FMLG experience to identify where and how changes can be made ◎ Suggestions for further development ◎ Action planning ◎ Closure

By the end of the workshop participants...

➢ have shared their experiences on assisting farmers to establish experimental plots,

➢ have shared the main silvicultural practices selected/applied by forest users, and the reasons for these

➢ have established a system of record keeping,

➢ have identified problems encountered and possible solutions as to how to improve the sharing of lessons learnt and experimentation results between the FMLG learning group and FUG members

➢ have looked at ways of facilitating difficult group dynamics and have reflected on the changes in FMLG group dynamics from the early stage of implementation

➢ have reflected on the facilitation skills and methods they have used in the different stages of the FMLG approach

Facilitating simulation in the classroom

▣ What is simulation?

Simulation is recreating a certain situation, making it as 'real' as possible for the purpose of practice. This method is also used for people who want to be pilots. Before they can fly a real plane they will first practice in a flight-simulator.

▣ Why use simulation in the classroom?

The best learning environment for field facilitators is in the village, but it is not always possible to go to a village where participants can practice every skill or stage of the participatory decision-making process. The trick is to create, as much as possible, a village setting and atmosphere in the classroom.

▣ How to prepare beforehand?

Preparation is as important as the simulation itself. If the participants are not able to put their feet in the shoes of the villagers and imagine being in a village meeting or workshop the simulation will not work. So be prepared!

Tips for preparation

1. Have a couple of things ready in the classroom that remind participants of a village setting, like farmers' hats, mats to put on the floor, etc.
2. Explain the purpose of using simulation as a way of learning to the participants (see above).
3. Tell the story of the village and the setting in which the simulation takes place.
4. Explain that one participant will play the role of field facilitator and the others will be villagers.
5. Divide the slips on which the different roles are described and explain to each person individually, if needed.
6. Ask them to help you rearrange the room, to make it look like a village setting. When everything is ready, ask them to take a seat as the villagers would do.

▣ How to run it?

1. Start the simulation by asking participants to enter the room (just like actors coming on stage).
2. Stop the simulation at an appropriate time. Sometimes the simulation will come to a natural end, but more often you will have to stop it when you think that it has generated enough learning material for reflection, or simply when time is running out.
3. Announce that you have stopped the simulation, and go back to normal seating arrangements for the reflection exercise.
4. Ask participants to de-role. This means that they consciously stop being a villager or facilitator and are once again participants in a training workshop. This may sound melodramatic, but it is an important step otherwise it will be impossible to reflect objectively on the experience.

▣ How to reflect afterwards?

Again the reflection is as important as the simulation itself. Most of the actual learning points are raised in these reflection exercises if you schedule enough time and carefully probe for thoughts, feelings, etc.

Typical reflection questions are:

◎ *How did you feel as a facilitator or as a villager?*
◎ *How did it go?*
◎ *What happened?*
◎ *How did it start?*
◎ *What happened next?*
◎ *Why did that happen?*
◎ *What went well? Why?*
◎ *What was difficult? Why?*
◎ *What would you do differently next time? How? Why?*
◎ *Etc...*

Most session plans include specific detailed reflection questions. These questions evolved gradually while running the same session a couple of times. These questions will help you the first time you run the session. Feel free, however, to adapt them to your own style and experiences.

List of facilitation resources

References

Author	Title	Relevant pages in this manual
Sam Kaner	Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making, New Society Publishers, Canada, 1998	42, 46, 50, 61, 65, 75, 78, 115, 121, 146, 147, 154, 173, 191, 231
Sejal Worah	Integrated Conservation and Development, A Trainer's Manual, WWF, 1999	28
Christine Grieshaber	Step by Step, Group Development, A Trainer's Handbook, German Foundation for International Development, 1994	126, 228
Jane Banez-Ockelford	Partners in Creative Training, Training of Trainers in Cambodia, A Training Manual. PACT/JS, March 1995	20
Peter Renner	The Art of Teaching Adults, How to Become an Exceptional Instructor and Facilitator, Training Associates, 1993	108
Julius E. Eitington	The Winning Trainer, Winning Ways to Involve People in Learning, third edition, 1996, page 527	128
Leslie Bendaly	Games Teams Play, Dynamic Activities for Tapping Work Team Potential, 1996, page 74	90
Tonie Nooyens	Seeds for Sustainable Community Natural Resources Management, The Ratnakiri NRM Action Research Project Cambodia 1995-2000, CD-rom produced for IDRC and UNDP/CARERE, September 2000	39
FAO/FTPP	Gender Analysis and Forestry, Section 2: How to design and carry out participatory training workshops, 1995, page 21	132
Centre for Rural Development and Training (CRDT)	Training materials distributed during VSO training course	109, 182, 193
Training Shop UK	Training materials distributed during training course "Advanced Facilitation Skills", 2001	30, 41, 84, 99, 113, 187
Carol A. O' Connor	The handbook for organizational change	246
Gary Kroehnert	100 Training Games	211

Recommended readings

Author	Title
Sam Kaner	Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making, New Society Publishers, Canada, 1998
Laurens van Veldhuizen	Developing Technology With Farmers, A Trainer's Guide for Participatory Learning, Netherlands, 1997
AGRITEX	Learning Together Through Participatory Extension: A Trainer's Guide, Zimbabwe, 1999
Dale Hunter	The Art of Facilitation: How to Create Group Synergy, Fisher Books, 1995
Dale Hunter	Zen of Groups: A Handbook for People Meeting With a Purpose
Roger M. Schwarz	The Skilled Facilitator, Practical Wisdom for Developing Effective Groups, Jossey-Bass

Recommended websites

Facilitation

Professional Organizations and Forums supporting facilitators
(some have great resources!)

Website address	Description
www.thefacilitator.com	Online facilitation magazine. Written by facilitators for facilitators
www.thinksmart.com	Professional association whose mission is to assist and support members in their efforts to revitalize organizations through the powerful use of innovation, creativity and group thinking skills. Articles, links, self and organizational assessments, and discussion forums. Although they are not directly aimed at facilitators there are some great ways to stimulate your creativity. Try the idea gym!
www.iaf-world.org	International Association of Facilitators "The IAF promotes, supports and advances the art and practice of professional facilitation through methods exchange, professional growth, practical research, collegial networking and support services"

http://www.wlv.ac.uk/crdt/indexm.htm	Web site of Center for Rural Development and Training (CRDT). Offers courses on building facilitation skills and other aspects of rural development.

Facilitators / trainers

Other Sites which offer often "free" and "exciting" resources to facilitators and trainers

www.facilitationfactory.com	"Ever sit back and wish that there was a place that would house everything that you needed for a group session at your fingertips? Have you ever wished for a resource that allowed you to surf through facilitation concepts or find relevant quotes with the push of a button? "
	This web site is a commercial web site which you need to subscribe to but they have a months free trial. Full of tips and ideas and a facilitators' forum.
www.reviewing.co.uk	"Active Reviewing" site. Although not directly exploring the concept of facilitation this site has some great tips and free resources for dynamic learning. Good for stimulating ideas on facilitation methods! Particularly interesting to find ideas on feedback and review methods.
www.thetrainingoasis.com	Although aimed at trainers there are lots of ideas here on how to spice up meetings using innovative methods. Many of these facilitation methods and other ideas found here could be adapted for use with farmers and ... its free! Their slogan is "out of the box strategies for bottom line results!"
www.thetrainingshop.co.uk	Again aimed at trainers but many ideas are appropriate for general facilitation. You can buy a wide range of "toys" to use in your meetings and with groups, or get ideas as to how to make your own toys from their expensive range!
http://homepage.tinet.ie/~mjcollins/index.htm	"The Training Professionals Gateway." A list of skills needed for training. Click on facilitation skills and it leads you into some interesting thoughts and resource ideas mainly from the business world where a lot of the innovative thinking on facilitation is going on. There is also a section on creativity, problem solving and others.
www.mapnp.org	Facilitation (Face-to-Face and On-Line) written by Carter McNamara, MBA, PhD. A breakdown of the key skills needed for facilitation and their links with many other resources and papers

written on each skill. Includes giving feedback, difficult group dynamics, etc. Gives many library links and lists of organizations and list-serves which you may like to contact/join if you want to be on the "cutting edge" of facilitation

www.cornell.edu — Lots of icebreakers for your meetings and group activities

www.socialimpact.com — Some notes and articles on facilitation and the difference between facilitation and training

## Participation

http://www.iied.org — IIED have many publications on participation and natural resource management. In addition they offer free notes on participatory learning and action.

www.ids.susx.ac.uk — IDS participation group; this has a search mode where you can search for papers or ideas on participation. It also covers aspects of natural resource management; ELDIS participation guide

www.ica-usa.org — This is an Institute of Cultural Affairs web site and has a lot of ideas and provides courses worldwide on the technology of participation or TOP
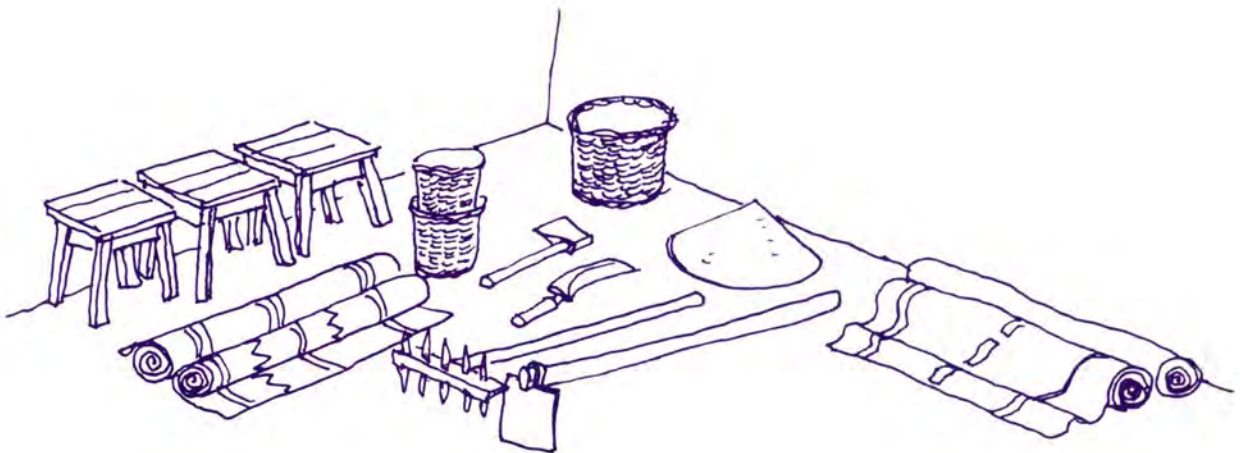
Glossary

Term	Explanation
Adult learning	Adult learning theory involves a number of principles as to how adults learn best. This manual is based on these.
Attitude	Actions or behavior that show how a person thinks or feels. Attitudes can often be observed by the way someone responds to other people, and to ideas and experiences (e.g. with respect, trust, caring, sensitivity, willingness to listen, etc.)
Buzz groups	Is a training method which involves forming participants in small groups of two or three, where they are already sitting, and quickly "buzzing" on answers to a specific question or problem.
Choose your spot	Training method that uses statements to draw participants out.
Concepts	Ideas or theories.
De-role	Is a step taken after participants have been involved in a role-play. It involves participants mentally stepping out of their role and becoming themselves again.
Drawing people out	Is a way to encourage participants to contribute in a group or reflect and share their reflections with the rest of the group.
Energizer	Energizers are activities designed to make learning easier and more fun for both the participants and trainers alike. Different terms are used such as icebreaker or warm-up depending on the main purpose of the activity.
Experiential learning	Learning is seen as a four-stage cycle in this model: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation.
Facilitation	Facilitation can be described as the conscious process of assisting a group to successfully achieve its task while functioning as a group.
Feedback	In this manual there are three different types of feedback mentioned: daily feedback, peer feedback, and personal feedback.
Fish bowl	Training method that structures a plenary discussion in a creative way.
Ice breaker	Is an energizer with the main purpose of getting to know each other better, or in other words 'to break the ice'.

Insight	A new understanding that one has as a result of a specific experience or situation.
Knowledge	Information, theories, concepts, ideas, principles and facts that the learner should know which enables them to perform a specific task.
Lecturette	Mini lecture of a maximum of 15 to 20 minutes.
Leveling-off	Involves ensuring that everyone in a group has a similar understanding of the concept or task or at least understands the different perceptions in the group.
Manual	Book with training guidelines, often in the form of session plans.
Mind mapping	Mind mapping is a training method to explore, in a creative way, a certain concept or issue by unfolding linked topics and ideas in one presentation on a single sheet of paper, using symbols, words, lines and arrows.
Paraphrasing	Repeating what somebody has said, using your own words.
Participatory training methods	Training methods that involve the learners or participants actively in the learning process.
Probing	Probing is asking follow-up questions to gain more understanding.
Reflection	Consider previous experience to make sense of it, to ponder, to discover...
Running a brainstorm	Is to gather participants ideas in an uncensored manner and is used to indicate when a trainer should actively use this method "brainstorming."
Session	Logical part of the content or a topic which can be presented in a reasonable time, in general one to two hours and less than three hours.
Session plan	A written document that explains what the learning objectives, procedure, time and resources are for all the activities during the session. Also referred to as lesson plan in a college or university context.
Skill	An activity one is able to do. Either by using the hands and body (psychomotor), mind (thinking and analyzing skills) or combination of those (facilitation skills).
Snowballing	Participatory training method, where the groups start small, but get bigger and bigger (like snow balls).

Step back	Is used to indicate that reflection on the wider picture or scenario is needed.
Walking through	Is a step by step sequential action often referring to the steps in the session plan or the flow of an exercise or handout.
Warming-up	Is an energizer with the main purpose being to warm up for a new topic in a creative way. Often meant as an eye-opener.
Wrapping-up	Usually happens at the end of a session or a specific activity when the trainer is expected to pull together all the main learning points, summarize and link them with the reality of participants or other sessions.

The Art of Building Facilitation Capacities

A Training Manual by Lydia Braakman & Karen Edwards

This manual offers you an opportunity to:

- ◎ Improve your own skills and understanding of the concept and practice of facilitation
- ◎ Inspire and excite you to share with others informally how facilitation can improve and strengthen participatory processes within your own organization
- ◎ Stimulate and provide you with ideas as to how to train others in specific skills and concepts of facilitation
- ◎ Provide you with a framework for training design to build the capacities of facilitators in both short and long term processes
- ◎ Prepare you with resources and hand-outs which you can adapt and distribute in your training courses and workshops

Although the manual was originally designed for the use of trainers who build capacities of field workers in facilitation skills, it has been effectively used with a much wider range of audiences, including field workers, extension workers, college teachers and managers working for governments, NGOs or projects. Practical ideas and tips about how to use and adapt the manual for different target groups are included in the manual.

The manual is part of a facilitation package developed by RECOFTC which includes a training video that helps the trainer bring real life scenes from the field into the classroom alongside the sessions suggested in the manual. The facilitation package has grown out of work conducted by RECOFTC's programs. RECOFTC has been actively involved in training and capacity building initiatives since 1998.