METHODOLOGY FOR COMMUNE FORESTRY EXTENSION WORKER

REFERENCE MATERIAL

1st Draft Son La, July 2002
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Commune Forestry Extension</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks and Role of Commune Forestry Extension Worker</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks and Role of Forest Protection Officers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodologies and tools used in Forestry Extension</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land use Planning and Land Allocation methodology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Protection and Development Regulations</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Forest Management Plans</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools to support villagers in forest management</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main activities of a Commune Forestry Extension Worker</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to organise a village meeting</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to conduct regular monitoring visits</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to write a monthly report</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to support the annual evaluation (3rd workshop)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Facilitation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The purpose of facilitation in commune forestry extension</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The facilitation house</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult education principles</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Facilitation Skills     Listening – Questioning – Probing</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basics in facilitating group communication</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNE FORESTRY EXTENSION WORKER

Purpose

Following ongoing policy changes from state managed to participatory forest management increasingly more rights are being transferred to local communities. Consequently, capacity of local forest users in planning sustainable utilisation of their forest resources has to be further strengthened.

Despite the need for extension to facilitate this process and as being expressed in the national policies, a large portion of foresters and the general public in the country has limited awareness for the need and the value of forestry extension.

The fundamental forestry extension problem in Vietnam is that trained staff and extension facilities are few or absent in most rural areas of the country. Despite this fact, ongoing national forestry programs like the Decree 661/QT-TTg from July 98 (5 Mio ha- Programme) clearly depend on a functioning forestry extension structure to achieve the desired long-term impact.

At present, so-called Agroforestry Extension Worker are supposed to cover both agricultural and forestry topics. The reality however shows that forestry topics are mostly excluded from the extension service.

The main scope of the CFEW therefore is (i) to assist local communities to manage their forests with increased self-reliance and (ii) to inform communities about the forestry policy framework affecting their forest management.

THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF FORESTRY EXTENSION ARE:

- **To increase people's participation** at village level in the decision-making process to identify and agree on suitable forest protection and management and to assist communities in improving the utilisation of their forest resources according to approved management plans.

- **To strengthen communities capacity** in silvicultural management techniques to effectively make use of their forests without degrading their resource base.

- **To provide a flexible service** that can be adapted to the specific local conditions in order to meet the real local demand.
Tasks and Role of Commune Forestry Extension Worker

Commune Forestry Extension Worker are specialised staff assisting the Commune Party Cell, People's Committee and Chairman of People Committee in managing the forestry activities in the commune.

Their detailed tasks are to:

Facilitate villagers:
- in the decision-making for forest development and management
- to solve violation cases according to Forest Protection Regulations
- to develop and monitor annual Forest Management Plans
- to carry out self-evaluation of forest protection regulations

Co-operate with district rangers:
- to introduce forestry techniques for villagers
- to help villagers participate in national forestry programs and project activities
- to disseminate and explain relevant forestry policy to village members

Monitor and evaluate:
- the implementation of forest protection regulations
- to identify further support needs for community forestry activities

Technical assistance:
- To provide basic technical assistance based on request

Tasks and Role of Forest Protection Officers

District Forest Protection officers provide guidance for CFEW in silvicultural techniques and provide updated information on forest policies.
Their detailed tasks are as follows:

- To inform CFEW about the results of the CFMP and the annual plan of forestry activities developed by the villagers, so that CFEW know what the villagers are expecting from the extension service
- To provide orientation about forestry policies and national programs
- To train CFEW in silvicultural techniques and forest management planning
- Forest Protection officers are requested as technical resource persons and intermediaries in the dissemination of national and provincial forest policies.

**METHODOLOGIES AND TOOLS USED IN FORESTRY EXTENSION**

In community forestry natural resources are managed by a number of people ranking from groups of households to villages or even communes. In order to regulate and coordinate the activities of all parties involved methodologies have been developed (i) to clearly define forest areas under specific function and use, (ii) to develop enforceable regulations on forest protection and development, and (iii) to provide a planning basis for sustainable forest utilisation.

**Land use Planning and Land allocation methodology**

**Purpose**

Clear and secure access rights of communities on forest resources are one precondition for community forest management. Local control over forest resources can be improved by land use planning and land allocation, in particular through defining the boundaries between villages and communes. Through participation of the local communities concerned the approach aims to get a better understanding of the local conditions, problems and potentials. The process is supported by the use of a 3-D village model made from local available materials. The overall planning process in the village is carried out over a period of 2-4 days.

The LUPLA process lead to the preparation of a set of maps at a scale of 1:10,000 including: (1) the present land use map, (2) the future land use map, and (3) the land allocation map.

The final product of the LUPLA process are land use right certificates (Red Book Certificates) ensuring long-term security to invest labour and finance in forest management and protection.
Main objectives

- Direct and full participation of local people in the whole process of Land use planning and land allocation.
- Feasibility within locally available financial, human and technical resources at district and communal levels in Lai Chau province.
- Acceleration of the Land use planning and land allocation process in an efficient and sustainable manner by applying PRA.

Brief overview

In 1999 the LUPLA methodology developed by SFDP has been approved as provincial standard. The methodology process essentially follows ministerial guidelines and decisions and consists of 6 major steps as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 1: PREPARATION</th>
<th>Establish steering committee at district level and working group at community level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STEP 2: FIELD SURVEY FOR DATA COLLECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF CURRENT LANDUSE MAPS</td>
<td>Assessment PRA local conditions, problems, potentials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP 3: LANDUSE PLANNING AND PROPOSED ALLOCATION PLAN</td>
<td>Prepare present land-use map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP 4: ALLOCATION IN THE FIELD</td>
<td>3-D Model to elaborate and agree on village land use plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP 5: APPRAISING, APPROVING DOCUMENTS AND GRANTING LANDUSE RIGHT CERTIFICATES AT DISTRICT LEVEL</td>
<td>Discuss and agree on land allocation to individual households. Clarification of procedures, rights, obligations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP 6: COMPILING CADASTRAL DOCUMENTS, CHECKING, CALCULATING COST AND HANDLING OVER LANDUSE RIGHT CERTIFICATES TO HOUSEHOLDS</td>
<td>Land Allocation, mapping demarcation in the field, sign agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrative processing of land title application and red book issuing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Forest Protection and Development Regulations

Purpose

The methodology aims to build each farmer’s capacity to analyse their forest resources and traditional regulations, eventually identifying and adopting the forest regulations that will best respond to farmers’ and government’s forest management needs. The purpose is also to assist the Forest Protection Officers to establish a rapport of trust, respect and exchange of information with local communities.

Consequently the methodology is not meant to instruct farmers on how the forest regulations should be prepared but through participatory training methods to provide them with tools and skills which will enable them to analyse their own forest resources, and to generate new ideas on forest regulations.

Main objectives

- To protect and develop existing forest resources for future sustainable forest management;
- To strengthen peoples’ capacity in protecting and managing their forests according to approved regulations developed by themselves;
- To directly involve local people in forest protection and management and to provide some benefits from timber and non-timber forest products;
- To provide socially acceptable regulations which can be monitored and enforced even at village level.

Brief overview of the FPR Process

The overall process from the design to the dissemination of the forest protection and development regulations requires about 2-3 months.

At village level 2-4 half-days meetings are considered a sufficient time for the planning and elaboration of the forest regulation document.

Before facilitating the first village meeting in order to introduce the approach to the community, existing data on forest resources, village socio-economic data and other government regulations have to be gathered and reviewed.

During the village meetings the community members share their ideas and opinions on the purpose of the Forest Protection and Development Regulations and agree upon what they
would like to achieve with them.

In the following the villagers jointly discuss their Forest Protection and Development Regulations containing detailed information about (i) forestland grouped according to specific functions and management, (ii) benefits and punishment, (iii) hunting and grazing regulations and (iv) fire prevention.

Once the village Forest Protection and Development Regulations have been developed and agreed by all community members, the regulations are then submitted by the village management board to the commune authorities, and from the commune to the district authorities for approval.

At village level the farmers themselves are main responsible to ensure that regulations designed by them are followed. This is one of the main reasons why the new guidelines for forest regulation stress the importance of community members' participation in the design process.

### STEP 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE VILLAGERS
- Introduction to the meeting and setting village FPR objectives

### STEP 2: PLANNING PROCEDURES IN THE VILLAGE
- Forest classification and identification of main problems related to protection and management
- Regulations for harvesting of forest products
- Regulations for uplands clearing and burning, and design the fire prevention plan
- Regulations for cattle grazing
- Regulations for hunting and harvesting of wildlife
- Benefits and duties of forest owners and protectors
- Procedure for fining, compensations, and awarding
- Writing forest regulations document

### STEP 3. PLAN APPROVAL AND FEEDBACK
- Approval of village forest regulations
- Dissemination of the regulations within the community

### STEP 4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PLAN IMPLEMENTATION
- Monitoring an enforcement
- Periodical review of the village forest regulations
Community Forest Management Plans

Purpose

With view to sustainable management of village forests and forestland, the Community Forest Management Plan (CFMP) methodology of SFDP is designed to guide local people and forestry staff to identify forest management activities to be approved by district authorities. CFMPs serve as a planning basis for relevant authorities to control and enforce forest utilisation carried out by local communities. Approved plans are an important means to balance villagers’ interest and administrative support and to provide forestry inputs for the Village Development Planning (VDP).

The CFMP is the base for planning silvicultural activities according to the demand and priorities for each village.

Main objectives

- To sustain or improve current forest status in terms of quality and quantity through participatory forest protection and sustainable forest utilisation,
- To assist the villagers in the project area to extract timber, fuelwood and other forest products in line with the Forest Protection Regulations already approved,
- And to serve as a planning basis for relevant authorities to control and enforce forest utilisation carried out by local communities.

Brief overview

Through a participatory analysis the current status, ownership and volume of each forest location in the village area is identified. For each of these forest locations specific functions like protection, protection combined with production, plantation or natural regeneration is discussed among the forest users. During a joint field survey forest area and forest status are verified and if necessary, current village borders are re-confirmed to settle former land conflicts.

Derived from a need based resource assessment, forestry activities of the community are identified and quantified in order to balance the supply and demand ratio of the village forest resources. In case of insufficient resources of a specific forest product, possible solutions are discussed to raise future supply. This leads to a long-term (5 years) forest management plan, Out of which the annual forest management plan is extracted in order to gradually fulfil the long-term goal.
After consensus among the village members, the annual community forest management plan is then submitted by the village leader to the commune authorities, and from the commune to the district authorities for approval. The forest protection unit in charge of the commune or the commune staff participating in the process of approval feedback the approved plan to the village management board.

The annual forest management plan is incorporated into the Village Development Plan (VDP), which forms the legal planning basis for the coming year.

An evaluation at the end of each year with the support of the commune forest rangers considerably strengthens the villagers’ capacity in sustainable management of forest resources at village level.

The methodology consists of four steps with (i) a preparatory part including the training of implementing institutions at different levels, (ii) the actual planning at village level, (iii) the approval at district level and feedback to the village, and (iv) the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation on a yearly basis.
STEP 1: PREPARATION
   A. Village selection
   B. Gather maps and data on land use status, land use planning and land allocation

STEP 2: PLANNING PROCEDURES IN THE VILLAGE
   A. Resource Analysis
      Analysis of the existing forest resources
      Define areas according to forest function classification
      Assess demand and supply of fuelwood, timber, bamboo poles and shoots etc.
   B. Field Survey
      Verify and complete resource analysis
      Forest Inventory (If >1 m³ of timber or >200 bamboo/ha)
   C. Elaboration of long term forestry plan (5 years)
      Based on results from forest survey and socio-economic conditions
   D. Elaboration of annual forestry plan
      Prior to VDP in March or April:
      Plantation or plantation tending, protection
      Silvicultural activities
      Data will provide forestry input into VDP
   E. Village meeting and discussion
      Plan is passed after being discussed by villagers

STEP 3. PLAN APPROVAL AND FEEDBACK
    From commune level submitted for approval to district FPU and DPC and the
district FPU will provide feedback to the VMB

STEP 4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PLAN IMPLEMENTATION
    District FPU facilitate self-evaluation at village level
Tools to support villagers in forest management

Group meetings:
Group meetings provide opportunities for people to share experiences and discuss and reach a common agreement on topics concerning the whole community or sub-groups of the community.

Trials:
In order to assess the technical, financial and social feasibility of new practices on a small-scale. Trials are always separated into 2 parts, the old/normal practice as reference and the new practice to be tested.

Demonstrations:
Silvicultural techniques can be applied in some areas to demonstrate results of approved techniques to the community following the concept of “seeing is believing”.

Training:
Lack of technical knowledge can lead to unsustainable forest development. Technical training can increase the management capacity and lead to a better utilisation of forest resources.

Input supply:
Material supplies can help to convince farmers to apply new techniques and can serve as an initial starting point for independent continuation on wider areas.

Study tour:
Study tours can facilitate the search of suitable technical options and can visualise benefits and problems that may come up during the own future implementation. In later stages study tours can provide the opportunity to share experiences and to reflect on the own implementation possibly leading to new options for further improvement with new training needs.

Coaching production group:
For some activities joint marketing within one group of the same interest in production can increase the benefit for each member.
NOTE:

- Farmers' interests in forest utilisation differ according to physical, social and economical site conditions.
  
  Therefore, forestry extension must be flexible to respond to the local demand.

- Only if villagers create a real self-interest in the service offered independent continuation can be expected in the long run.
  
  Therefore, extension workers must not impose technical options top-down to farmers, but facilitate farmers in identifying the most appropriate practices for their specific situation.

- Community forestry concerns the common property of the local society as a whole.
  
  Therefore, group decision-making, joint planning, implementation and protection has to be facilitated by the CFEW.

MAIN ACTIVITIES OF A COMMUNE FORESTRY EXTENSION WORKER

Forest management includes a wide range of activities and often lasts for tens of year before the final products can be harvested and a new production cycle can start. Therefore, forest management needs proper planning and frequent monitoring and evaluation over many years. The main activities of a commune forestry extension worker therefore are to support this planning and evaluation process and to provide guidance and technical support on request.

In the following main activities and tips for their implementation are described:
**How to organise a village meeting**

Part of the role as an extensionist is to support participatory decision-making. Village meetings are a tool that helps villagers share their issues, develop common understanding and identify possible solutions for the whole community. *Extensionists are ultimately responsible for helping villagers to 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 and follow-up actions between meetings can be more effective than trying to achieve certain outcomes in the meeting itself. If the CFEW is not the only one responsible for reaching an outcome then it is crucial to consult with the others before the meeting.

Here is a short checklist to improve the effectiveness of village meetings:

- **Timely and detailed planning**
  - Who will participate, who has to be invited?
  - Date, place and time of meeting
  - What materials are necessary to prepare?
  - What resources are available to support the village?
- Prepare a structured agenda clearly linking topics to outcomes
- Leave the time schedule flexible enough for further changes

**Main outcomes of a successful meeting are the following:**

- Everybody had the chance to speak out his opinions and concerns
- At the end everybody understands the main outcomes
- The outcome is a shared result representing the opinion of the whole group
- Action points are summarised and a copy remains with the participants
- Activities have a clear timeframe and a responsible person

**What is an agenda and what do we use it for?**

A good agenda is as an effective facilitation and planning tool to make a village meeting an effective exercise. An agenda is presented as table form clarifying the desired outcome for each topic and clearly identifying activities to reach each outcome. The skill of developing a
A good agenda is to ensure that both outcomes and process are clear and that the agenda is realistic in the time allocated.

**An agenda can help to:**
- identify outcomes that need to be reached by the end of the meeting
- identify the process that will help reach the outcome
- keep the meeting in focus as everyone has the same understanding of the process
- clarify the roles and responsibilities of the process
- maximise the effective and efficient use of time available

**Here is an example how an agenda could look like:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 – 8:45</td>
<td>Afforestation for 2003</td>
<td>Group discussion</td>
<td>Afforestation plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:45 – 9:00</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
<td>--</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**How to conduct regular monitoring visits**

The CFEW should conduct frequent village visits and prepare a small report on his visit. This will keep him informed about the activities in the village and helps to become familiar with the people. The monitoring visits are open to all interested farmers. The extension worker will discuss with the farmers the development of their forest activities. If farmers ask for specific information, the extension worker can explain more about this subject, which can even be in form of a short training. During the monitoring visits the extension worker gathers important data and summarises the content of the...
discussion in a short report in his monitoring book. Monitoring visits should be officially informed to farmers so that they can prepare contents for discussion. Discussion results need to be noted down carefully each time going to the field to be later reported to the district AES and Forest Protection Unit.

**How to write a monthly report**

After every month of work many activities have been carried out. In order to provide these information to higher administrative levels monthly reports have to be written in which the main activities, the gained results and encountered difficulties are listed. Only if higher levels are informed about the field activities on a regular basis external support in terms of funding or material supply can be expected to support the communities in their forestry activities.

**How to support the annual evaluation (3rd workshop)**

For one year of forest management many activities have been planned in the beginning and written down in the community forest management plan. However, some of the activities may showed to be more difficult to implement or have been changed due to many reasons during the year. In order to see how much of the planned activities have really been carried out and to what extent an evaluation has to be carried out. By comparing the planned and the implemented activities the planning for next year can be improved a lot.
INTRODUCTION TO FACILITATION

When supporting communities in their forest management an extension worker has to fulfil a number of tasks ranging from the organisation of meetings, helping groups during decision-making processes or providing technical inputs. Consequently, apart from the technical knowledge, an extension worker also has to find suitable ways and the right words to communicate with farmers and working with groups. In order to guide these processes of learning, sharing and decision-making the extension worker needs special skills to ‘make things more easy to understand’, ‘to enable people to do some things’ or to help people help themselves by simply ‘being there’, listening and responding to peoples’ needs. This support of individuals, groups and organisations during participatory processes is called Facilitation.

As the focus for this workshop is facilitating groups and meetings we will call it as:

*Facilitating is to assist a group to successfully achieve developed tasks as a group*

The purpose of facilitation in commune forestry extension

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?

We can do by creating a good and friendly atmosphere in which stakeholders can:

- identify and solve problems
resolve their own conflicts
plan together and make collective decisions
trouble-shoot
self-manage

The context of facilitation in commune forestry extension

The context of facilitation in commune forestry extension is the facilitation of groups, and group processes. As forest often involves many owners and users decisions have to be reached during meetings in a joined manner.

How does good facilitation support effective sharing in groups?

From all ideas and experiences presented in 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 reason - an idea that is expressed in an easy and interesting way will be taken more seriously by more people. But 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.

In most groups people really want to voice opinions, share, listen to each other's experiences and come up with interesting new ideas. But the range and richness of their sharing will be limited by their capacity and support offered by the facilitator. A skilled facilitator can be an excellent support to such groups. The following tips can help to have less ideas get lost, and more ideas are shared, through the intervention of a facilitator.

A facilitator can…

- summarise what somebody has said when the person is being repetitive, to help focus the person’s 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.
The power of a good facilitator

The main characteristic of a good facilitator is that s/he is 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 following picture illustrates some main roles that a commune forestry extensionist can play.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACILITATOR</th>
<th>EXTENSIONIST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. help villagers identify their benefits from afforestation)</td>
<td>(e.g. provide a list of potential species and their use)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(help a group to develop their desired outcomes)</td>
<td>(Gives suggestions on request)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBSERVER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. observe what people already know and what has to be further introduced)</td>
<td>(e.g. show how to apply fertilizer for seedlings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Understanding situations by only observing)</td>
<td>(Provides his own solution)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LECTURER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. provide a list of potential species and their use)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Gives suggestions on request)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The facilitation steps

A facilitator is like a person who reaches for a golden fruit on a high tree. In order to get the fruit he has to build a solid basis to stand on. To get from the ground to the crown of the tree he has to stack one developed skill (toolbox) after the other. With these skills the facilitator can assist groups to reach their own “golden fruit” or desired outcome.

S/he is not responsible for the desired outcome or fruit, that is the group’s task, but s/he will have an eye on all toolboxes so that nothing is forgotten and the group will have a basis solid enough to stand on.
The Golden Fruit of Facilitation

Technical skills
Communication within groups
Communication one to one
Positive attitude working with farmers
**Adult Education Principles**

When working with adults and facilitating village meetings some basic principles in the way adults learn have to be understood for effective facilitation and training.

**Some points about adults knowledge:**

- Adults have learnt much from life
- Adults learn most if they consider the topic relevant for their lives
- Adults learn most from experience and by reflecting experience
- Adults are experienced from life and will change behaviour only when they have self-motivation to do so

**Consequently, the success of learning depend on:**

- Motivation and capacity of the individual participants
- Atmosphere during the learning process
- Learning methods applied
- Trainers capacity to encourage and guide the learning process

**Therefore, the task of the facilitator is to create a learning situation in which:**

- Adults are stimulated to share their own experiences and to analyse these experiences in dialogue with others
- Adults can participate in all steps of what is discussed and implemented
- Adults are encouraged to search for causes (problem-identification) and solutions (problem-solving) before the facilitator adds important points not mentioned yet
- Adults are stimulated to discover solutions for themselves
- Adults have the chance to experience what they have learned
Remember:

It is not the knowledge as such that lead to action and change behaviour. It is motivation and active participation that lead to action.

Concentrate on learning-by-doing, experimenting and experiencing, rather than on talking and lecturing.

Basic Facilitation Skills      Listening – Questioning – Probing

Listening

Good listening is more difficult than we think

Hearing is:
✓ Passive

Listening is:
✓ active
✓ paying attention
✓ searching for meaning

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.

When listening we should try to do the following:

✓ show interest  ✓ be objective
✓ be patient   ✓ search actively for meaning
✓ be understanding   ✓ help the speaker develop competence and motivation in formulating thoughts, ideas and opinions
When listening we should avoid doing the following:

- rushing the speaker
- passing judgement too quickly in advance
- arguing
- giving advice unless it is requested by the other person
- interrupting
- jumping to conclusions

**QUESTIONING**

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gain people’s involvement</td>
<td>How do you feel about…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Get a feeling for peoples' thoughts, ideas or opinions</td>
<td>What is your idea about…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Involve quiet people</td>
<td>Tuan, what do you think?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Recognise important contributions</td>
<td>Hoa, that’s an interesting idea. Can you tell us more about it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Manage the meeting time</td>
<td>OK, we’ve spent quite a bit of time on that question. How do you feel about moving on?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Gain understanding by exploring both sides of an issue</td>
<td>That is one way of looking at it. Let’s look at the other side. What would happen if you…?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Types of questions

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Uses</th>
<th>Risks</th>
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</table>
| **Ask a question to the whole group** (perhaps written on a flip-chart) | - Stimulates everybody’s thinking  
- Useful for starting a discussion | - It may not be answered because nobody feels responsible  
- Only the opinion of dominant group members will be collected |
| **Ask a question to a single group member** | - Useful to involve women, silent or shy people  
- Make use of the experience of a specialised group member | - It can embarrass unprepared group members  
- If the person don’t understand the question, s/he will give an irrelevant answer |
| **Ask a question with who, what, when, where, how.** | - Help to discover new details  
- Good for analysing problem situations  
  *Why did this happen? Why did this happen?  
  * What needs to be changed?* | - Sometimes to broad question difficult to answer  
- Questions starting with why may make people feel threatened |
| **A question where I expect a specific answer** | - Useful in redirecting a discussion to the main focus  
- Useful for checking if participants really understand the topic | - Facilitator may impose his opinion  
- Participants likely answer what is expected and not what they really would like to share |
PROBING

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 centre 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When listening we should try to:</th>
<th>When listening we should avoid to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Listen actively</td>
<td>✓ Judge while listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Build the next question on the understanding of the previous answer</td>
<td>✓ Jump from one topic or issue to another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Clarify information</td>
<td>✓ Make assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Single out the problem or main points</td>
<td>✓ Lose track by getting bogged down in details or side-tracked</td>
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**Basics in facilitating group communication**

In the real situation commune forestry extension worker cannot be responsible for one or two persons within the community, the decision or solution must have been developed from different interests, experiences, capacity, and needs. This means CFEWs has to deal with a number of people. He or she has to be able to incorporate those differences and make sure the decisions come through an acceptable process so that the solution can be agreed by the whole community. In order to handle group dynamics the extensionist should understand some principle and nature of group behaviour.

**Tips for facilitating team building**

Building team spirit requires the effective combination of various facilitation skills such as observation, listening, feedback, 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
- 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 behaviour
- Show appropriate and expected behaviour yourself
- Form small groups very carefully
- Counsel individuals outside the group if necessary
What are the differences between participatory and conventional meeting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participatory meeting</th>
<th>Conventional meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everyone participates and speak out their thoughts, not just the one who speak loudest</td>
<td>The fastest thinkers and best speakers get more time to speak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different opinions are allowed within the group. Everyone knows everybody’s position or opinion</td>
<td>Differences of opinion are treated as conflicts that must be ignored or ‘solved’. No one really knows what is everybody’s position or opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People try to understand each other by asking supporting and exploring questions. “Is this what you mean?”</td>
<td>Questions are often understood as challenges, as if the person being questioned has done something wrong</td>
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<tr>
<td>People are able to listen to each other’s ideas because they know their own ideas will also be heard</td>
<td>People have difficulty listening to each other’s ideas because they are busy review what they want to say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each member contributes in discussing controversial issues.</td>
<td>Some members remain quiet on controversial issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When people make an agreement, the decision reflects a wide range of perspectives</td>
<td>When people come to an agreement, it is assumed that they are all thinking exactly the same thing</td>
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</table>

What can be done to guide the process of developing a participatory meeting?

1) Encouraging full participation

Often people don’t say what they are really thinking especially in a meeting. Sometimes it’s hard to take risks and people are afraid to be criticised by others. A facilitator should be aware of this tendency and help people overcome it. The role of the extensionist therefore is to create room for shy and silent people to speak out there opinions, wishes and concerns.

Especially women have to be supported to incorporate their point of view into the discussion.

In most groups the norm is that if you want to speak, do it simple and clear enough or interesting enough so the group will listen. Avoid too long speeches as the participants will become tired and will loose interest. Better involve participants into activities like preparing posters noting on flipcharts, etc.
2) Promoting mutual understanding and overcoming fixed positions

A group cannot perform best if the members don't understand each other. Most people find it difficult to free themselves from their fixed viewpoints. A facilitator helps a group realise that productive groups are built on mutual understanding. Different viewpoints therefore have to be collected and discussed to come to a satisfying result for everybody.

Misunderstandings are stressful for everyone involved. People in distress need support and need to be treated respectfully. For the facilitator it is essential not to take position, but to honour all points of view and to keep listening, so that each and every person feels confident that someone understands them.

3) Promoting 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 at a point of view that solving problems and resolving conflicts and only be “either my way or your way”.

A facilitator helps a group to search for ideas that incorporate everyone’s point of view. This can be a challenging task – the facilitator is often the only one who is thinking about the possibility that inclusive alternatives may exist. When using this new way of thinking, groups will discover the positive effects and often become more hopeful about their group’s effectiveness.

4) Sharing responsibilities

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.
The Diamond of Participatory Decision Making Process

| Full Participation | Mutual Understanding | Inclusive Solution | Sharing Responsibilities |

Decision Point
Tips for managing difficult group members

Here are some types of group members whose behaviour can create difficulties in meetings, and some options on how to manage them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>What you should do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominant people</td>
<td>- Place in same group as facilitator</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Encourage others by directly appoint them to speak out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent or shy people</td>
<td>- Reward any contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Let them work in small groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somebody who is always against your ideas</td>
<td>- Check out the reason</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Directly ask for the opinion of others</td>
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Building the process with positive group members

On the other hand some people can have a very positive effect on the group.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somebody helping by using his own words</td>
<td>- Ask his support on a difficult topic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Observe participants reaction while he explains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somebody searching for solution that make everybody satisfied</td>
<td>- Ask him for advice when the group could not agree on a decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Bring attention to him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somebody who suggests ideas</td>
<td>- Encourage him to explain his ideas to the group</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Connect his ideas with the meeting topic</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
To conclude the new lessons learnt let’s take some time to think about three questions and by this reflect once more on:

✓ What is the role of CFEW?
- Help villagers in their decision-making on forest management
- To build a link between the village and different supporting agencies
- Providing technical information on request

✓ Why facilitation is important for CFEW?
- Working with groups having different needs and interests
- People have to understand each other ideas to develop solutions satisfying everybody
- Assist a group to achieve desired outcomes

✓ Basic features for being a good CFEW
- Good attitude working with villagers
- Listening
- Observing
- Questioning
- Good Fitness for walking in the forest
Basic features for being a good CFEW

- Good attitude working with farmers
- Technical Skills
- Good fitness walking in the forest
- Observing
- Probing
- Listening
- Questioning