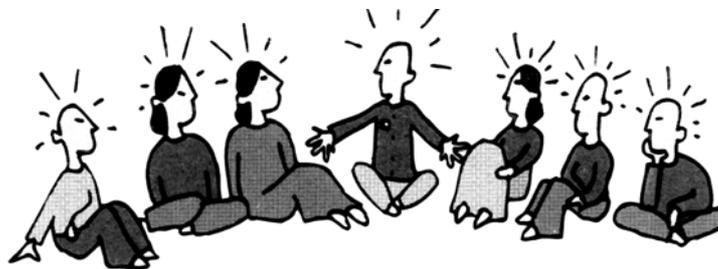




REFLECTION WORKSHOP

COMMUNE FORESTRY EXTENSION WORKER



HANDOUT

MATERIALS

How to write a monthly report

Your monthly report will help the supporting agencies like Forest Protection Unit or Agriculture and Rural Development Section, Agriculture Extension Unit etc. to identify and co-ordinate further support for your commune.

For writing the report you refer to the data from your monitoring table. Only look at those activities where difficulties were encountered and where the implementation differed from the planning. From these activities only copy the number and location to the monthly report table as shown in the example below. With this information the supporting agencies can very easy find all further details needed in the monitoring table.

Your task is further to clearly explain why and to what extend the planned activities where not implemented. In the column "solution reached" you further write down what the farmers agreed on to solve the problem.

If the problem cannot be solved by the villagers alone fill in the next column what help is needed so that the supporting agencies can plan their work.

Monitoring Table

No.	Date	Activity monitored	Location / area	Responsible...
1	10/08	Teak afforestation	Po Khom / 5 ha	Mr. Lo van Ha
...				

take over same number

take over same location

Monthly Report Form

No.	Location	Difficulties encountered	Solution reached	Further support needs
1	Po Khom	20% trees died because of fire	Replant destroyed area with 1600 seedlings	Transport of 300 seedlings from nursery
...				

Explain why and to what extent the implementation differs from the planning

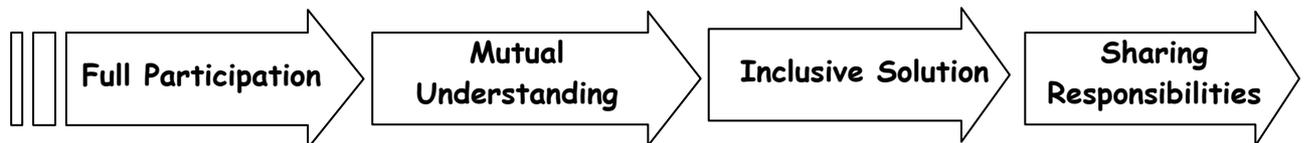
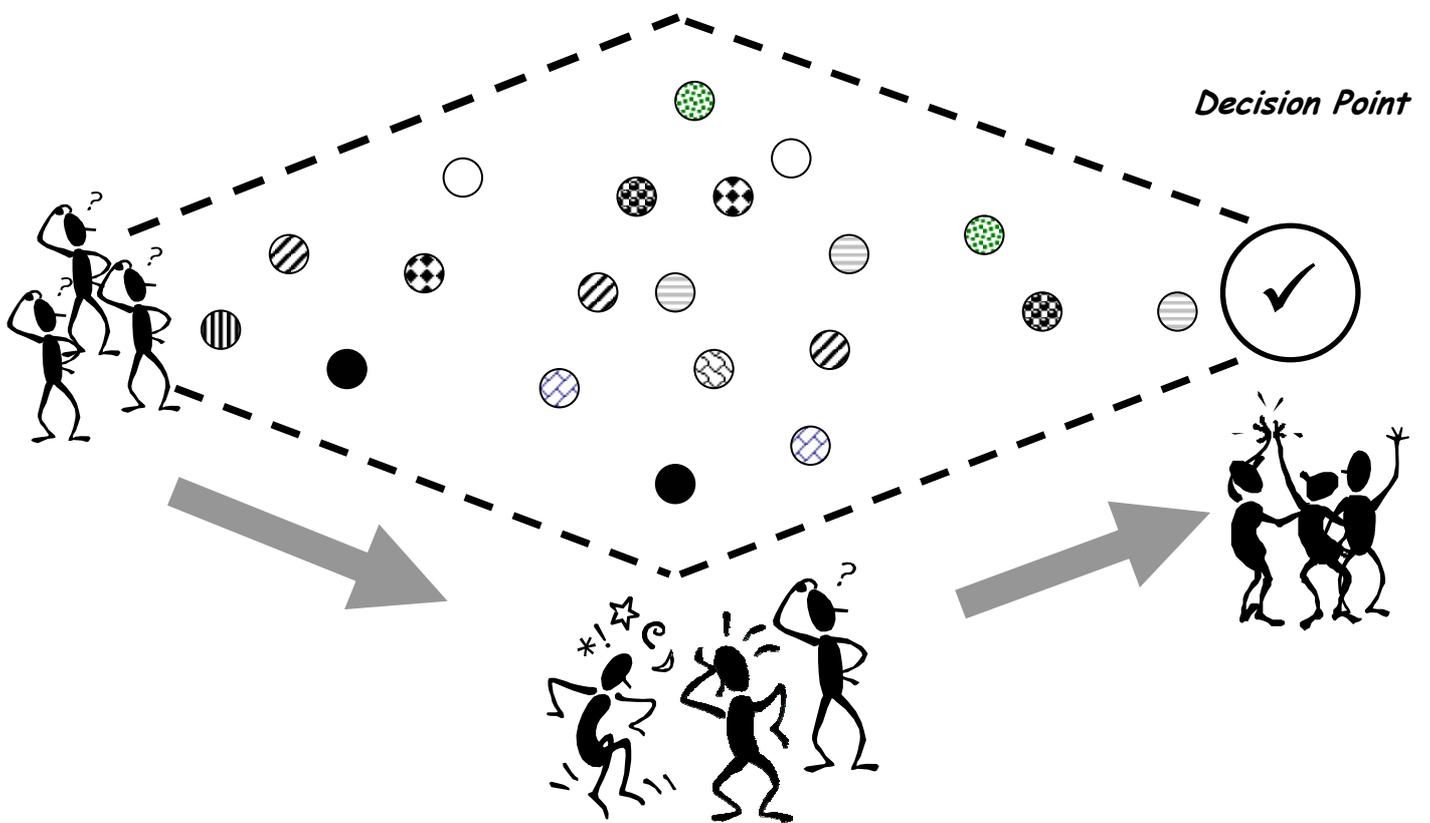
Explain what solution was found to improve the implementation

Explain what external support is needed to solve the difficulties

Participatory Decision-Making

Hand Out

The Diamond of Participatory Decision Making Process



What can be done to guide the process of 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 and help people to overcome this. Your role therefore is to create room for shy and silent people to speak out their opinions, wishes and concerns. Especially women have to be supported to incorporate their point of view into the discussion.

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 lose 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 to 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 develop a strong sense of responsibility for creating and developing sustainable agreements. They recognise 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.

Facilitation

What is 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**.

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

Why is facilitation important for Commune Forestry Extension?

Effective forest management requires the recognition of the following lessons:

- ❑ As forest often involves many owners and users decisions have to be reached during meetings in a joined manner.
- ❑ 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

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.

S/he should try to ensure a fair, inclusive and open process that would establish a safe environment in which all stakeholders can fully participate.

This picture illustrates some main roles that a commune forestry extensionist can play.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ (e.g. help villagers identify their benefits from afforestation)❑ (help a group to develop their desired outcomes) <p style="text-align: center;">↪ FACILITATOR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ (e.g. provide a list of potential species and their use)❑ (Gives suggestions on request) <p style="text-align: center;">↪ EXTENSIONIST</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ (e.g. observe what people already know and what has to be further introduced)❑ (Understanding situations by only observing) <p style="text-align: center;">↪ OBSERVER</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ (e.g. show how to apply fertilizer for seedlings)❑ (Provides his own solution) <p style="text-align: center;">↪ LECTURER</p>

How Adult Learn?

Why do we need to know?

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

Some points about adults:

- ✓ 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 you applied
- ✓ Facilitators 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 stimulated to discover solutions for themselves.
- ✓ Adults have the chance to experience what they have learned

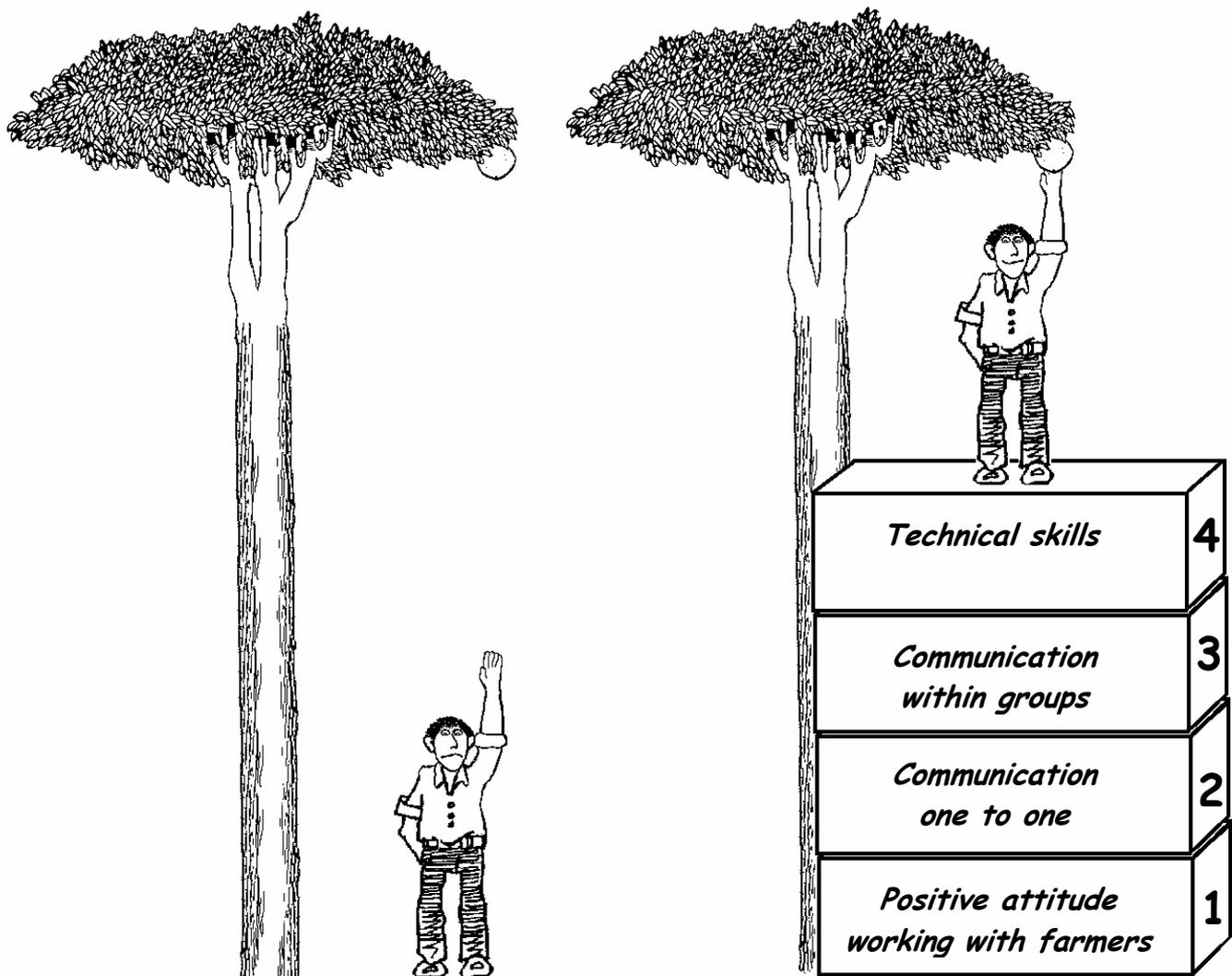
Remember:

- ✓ It is not the knowledge only that leads to action and change behaviour. It is motivation and active participation that leads to action.
- ✓ Concentrate on learning-by-doing, experimenting and experiencing, rather than on talking.

The golden Fruit of Facilitation

You as a facilitator are like a person who reaches for a golden fruit on a high tree. In order to get the fruit you have to build a solid basis to stand on. To get from the ground to the crown of the tree you have 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.

You are not responsible for the desired outcome or fruit, that is the group's task, but you will have an eye on all toolboxes so that nothing is forgotten and the group will have a basis solid enough to stand on.



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 patient
- ✓ be understanding
- ✓ be objective
- ✓ search actively for meaning
- ✓ help the speaker develop competence and motivation in formulating thoughts, ideas and opinions

When listening we should avoid doing the following:

- ✓ Do not talk
- ✓ rushing the speaker
- ✓ arguing
- ✓ interrupting
- ✓ Keep secrets of others for your own
- ✓ passing judgement too quickly in advance
- ✓ giving advice unless it is requested by the other person
- ✓ 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

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...?
3. Involve quiet people	Tuan, what do you think?
4. Recognise important contributions	Hoa, that's an interesting idea. Can you 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
<p>Ask a question to the whole group (perhaps written on a flipchart)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Stimulates everybody's thinking □ Useful for starting a discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ It may not be answered because nobody feels responsible □ Only the opinion of dominant group members will be collected
<p>Ask a question to a single group member</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Useful to involve women, silent or shy people □ Make use of the experience of a specialised group member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ It can embarrass unprepared group members □ If the person don't understand the question, s/he will give an irrelevant answer
<p>Ask a question with <i>who, what, when, where, how.</i> These questions can't be answered with a simple yes or no</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Help to discover new details □ Good for analysing problem situations <p><i>Why did this happen?</i> <i>What needs to be changed?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Sometimes to broad question difficult to answer □ Questions starting with why may make people feel threatened
<p>A question where I expect a specific answer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Useful in redirecting a discussion to the main focus □ Useful for checking if participants really understand the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Facilitator may impose his opinion □ Participants likely answer what is expected and not what they really would like to share

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?

<i>When probing we should try to:</i>	<i>When probing we should avoid to:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Listen actively✓ Build the next question on the understanding of the previous answer✓ Clarify information✓ Single out the problem or main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Judge while listening✓ Jump from one topic or issue to another✓ Make assumptions✓ Lose track by getting bogged down in details or side-tracked

Group Communication

In the real situation commune forestry extension worker cannot be responsible for one or two persons with in the community only. Most decisions or solutions must represent different peoples' interests, capacities, and needs. This means CFEWs has to deal with a number of people. He or she has to help that all ideas are represented in a final decision that can be accepted by the whole community. In order to deal with group dynamics the extensionist should understand some principles of group behaviour.

Tips for facilitating team building

Building team spirit needs 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 each other when the norms agreed on collectively are not followed
- In case groups get stuck, look for the problem with the group and look for solutions collectively
- Develop sensitivity in the group and share responsibility with the group
- Form small groups to support silent or to separate conflicting people
- Discuss sensitive issues with each individual outside the group

Effective Meeting Preparation

Part of the role as an extensionist is to support participatory decision-making. Village meetings are a normal tool that helps villagers share their issues, develop common understanding and identify possible solutions for the whole community. CFEW 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.

During village meetings your role as extensionist is to help others:

- ✓ *to identify what they want to achieve with the meeting and*
- ✓ *to reach the desired outcome.*

To reach these goals good preparation is needed for a successful meeting. The following checklist can help you during the planning process.

- finished*
 not yet

Checklist	Deadline	Status	Notes
<i>Date, place and time of meeting</i>			
<i>Who will participate, who has to be invited ?</i>			
<i>Is external support needed from district level?</i>			
<i>What materials are necessary to prepare ? (Poster, flipcharts...)</i>			
<i>What resources are available to support the village ? (Maps, Forest Protection regulations...)</i>			
<i>What are the main topics to be discussed?</i>			
<i>Prepare a structured agenda clearly linking topics to outcomes</i>			
<i>Leave the time schedule flexible for small changes</i>			
<i>Plan sufficient time for breaks</i>			

Meeting Agenda

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

An agenda is a table form where we can see the desired outcomes for each activity and the activities to reach each outcome.

An agenda helps to:

- ✓ identify outcomes to be reached
- ✓ identify the process that will help reach the outcome
- ✓ keep everyone having the same focus and understanding
- ✓ maximise the effective and efficient use of time available

Here is an example how an agenda could look like:

MEETING AGENDA			
Time	Topic	Activities	Outcome
8:00 - 8:45	Afforestation for 2003	Group discussion	Afforestation plan
8:45 - 9:00	Coffee break	--	--
...			

The diagram shows two callouts. One callout labeled "What?" points to the "Topic" column of the row for "Coffee break". Another callout labeled "How?" points to the "Activities" column of the same row. The "Activities" column for "Coffee break" contains "--".

Always remember...

A successful meeting will have the following outcomes:

- ✓ *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*

GOOD LUCK!

Handle Group Dynamics

How to work with 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.

Type	What you should do
Talkative people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Place in same group as facilitator<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage others by directly appoint them to speak out
Silent or shy people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Reward any contribution<input type="checkbox"/> Let them work in small groups
Somebody who is always against your ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Check out the reason<input type="checkbox"/> Directly ask for the opinion of others

How to work 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.

Type	What you should do
Somebody explain again for the group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Ask his support on a difficult topic<input type="checkbox"/> Observe participants reaction while he explains
Somebody searching for solution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Ask him for advice when the group could not agree on a decision<input type="checkbox"/> Bring attention to him
Somebody suggests ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Encourage him to explain his ideas to the group<input type="checkbox"/> Connect his ideas with the meeting topic