

# Training Module on Facilitation for Development



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## PREFACE

Agriculture is the one of the leading driving forces of the economy of Bangladesh and it must undergo a rapid transformation in both on the demand and supply side, by emphasizing higher value outputs, increased productivity, and redefined public and private sector roles. Driving these transformations will need a paradigm shift in food demand away from staple food grains to higher value products. Given the limitations on expanding cultivable area and rising distress due to climate change, the only way to meet Bangladesh's food needs will be through increasing productivity, the efficiency of water use and adaption of climate resilient technologies. The Government has launched many initiatives for improving growth of agriculture and these are being implemented under various policy initiatives and plans. The Government has also initiated need based research, demand driven, pluralistic and participatory extension approaches away from the traditional approaches.

Extension and Advisory Services (EAS) play a vital role in strengthening technical, managerial and organizational capacities of farmers who need frequent renewal of capacities to deal effectively with the evolving challenges faced by rural communities. The needs of farmers are constantly changing with time and their socio-economic attributes which calls for periodical upgrading in knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to keep pace with the emerging challenges and dynamics of extension services. Capacity building is essential in strengthening organizational and institutional development for coping to the changing varied needs of the clients.

Development is a process that creates growth, progress and makes changes while facilitation helps in accelerating this process. The Bangladesh Agricultural Extension Network (BAEN) with the support from GFRAS and AESA have undertaken this initiative to develop a training module on "Facilitation for Development" in Bangladesh context. This module is designed to support trainers from GO, NGO and private organizations involved in EAS delivery in developing capacities of both the grass root level extension staff as well as senior managers with the tools and resources they need to become a good facilitator.

I, expect that this training module will be used by trainers and facilitators of varied agencies involved in capacity development of EAS in Bangladesh for developing capacities of extension functionaries to enable them to offer better support, advice and guidance to farmers and farmer's organizations as well as middle and senior level extension managers in designing and implementing successful collaborative extension interventions. Agriculture Extension is changing and we need to change and keep pace with the process so as to transform agriculture in Bangladesh and bring about development through facilitation.

**Dr. Md. Saleh Ahmed**

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President, BAEN

## ABBREVIATION & ACRONYMS

ACI	: Agro-chemical Industry
ADB	: Asian Development Bank
ADP	: Agribusiness development project
AESA	: Agricultural Extension in South Asia
AFAAS	: African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services
AIS	: Agricultural innovation system
AIS	: Agricultural Innovation Systems
AKIS	: Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems
APEN	: Australasia-Pacific Extension Network Ltd.
AR4D	: Agricultural Research for Development
BAEN	: Bangladesh Agricultural Extension Network
BARC	: Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council
BARD	: Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
BARD	: Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
BARI	: Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute
BAU	: Bangladesh Agricultural University
BCRPA	: British Colombian Recreation and Parks Association
BINA	: Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture
Brac	: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BRDB	: Bangladesh Rural Development Board
BRRI	: Bangladesh Rice Research Institute
BSMRAU	: Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University
CAC	: Central Asia and the Caucasus
CADAIS	: Capacity Development in Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS)
CCDB	: Christian Commission for Development
CIRDAP	: International Centre for Research and Development in Asia Pacific
CNA	: Capacity Need Assessment
CRISP	: The Centre for Research on Innovation and Science Policy
COVID-19	: Corona Virus Induced Disease-2019
DAE	: Department of Agricultural Extension
DAI	: Development Alternative International
DAM	: Department of Agricultural Marketing
DCF	: Deputy Conservator of Forests
DFID	: The Department for International Development
DLS	: Department of Livestock Services
FD	: Forest Department
DoF	: Department of Fisheries
EAS	: Extension and Advisory Service
EU	: European Union
F4D	: Facilitation for Development
FAO	: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFS	: Farmer Field Schools
FMG	: Farmers Marketing Group
FtF	: Feed the Future
GEPA	: Export Promotion Authority
GFRAS	: Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services
GFRAS	: Global Forum for Rural Advisory Service
GO	: Government Organization
HVC	: High Value Crop
IAPP	: Integrated Agricultural Productivity Project
IAR4D	: Integrated Agricultural Research for Development



ICT	: Information Communication Technology
IDB	: Islamic Development Bank
iDE	: International Development Enterprise
IFAD	: International Fund for Agricultural Development
IP	: Innovation Platforms
IPP	: Innovation Policy Platform
IRRI	: International Rice Research Institute
JFM	: Joint Forest Management
JICA	: Japan International Cooperation Agency
LDDP	: Livestock and Dairy Development Project: LDDP
MMI	: Missing Middle Initiative
MoFA	: Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MSEP	: Multi-Stakeholder Engagement Processes
NARS	: National Research System
NATP	: National Agricultural Technology Project
NCDP	: Northwest Crop Diversification Project
NELK	: New Extension Learning Kit
NFE	: Non-formal Education
NGO	: Non-governmental organization
NIF	: National Innovation Facilitators
OECD	: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PO	: Producers' organization
R &D	: Research and Development
RAS	: Rural Advisory System
RDA	: Rural Development Academy
RDRS	: Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service
RFO	: Range Forest Officer
SAAO	: Sub-Assistant Agriculture Officer
SACP	: Smallholder Agricultural Competitive Project
SAU	: She-e-Bangla Agricultural University
SCDP	: Second Crop Diversification Project
SWOT	: Strength Weakness Opportunity and Threats
T&V	: Training & Visit
ToT	: Transfer-of-Technology
UN	: United Nations
UNDP	: United Nation's Development Program
UNIDO	: United Nations Industrial Development Organization
USAID	: U.S. Agency for International Development
VCA	: Value Chain Analysis
VCC	: Virtual Call Centers
WB	: World Bank

<b>GLOSSARY</b>	
<b>Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Accountability	A principle that commits all stakeholders to contribute depending on their interests and capabilities while being accountable to each other.
Agenda	A list of main topics that should be discussed at a meeting.
Aggressor	Person often disagree with other or is inappropriately outspoken
Analysis	A process of breaking down a complex problem or issue into smaller parts to understand it better.
Apex organization	Organizations, such as wholesalers, that take responsibility for coordinating marketing or products.
Assertive	To be very confident and slightly forceful with your ideas.
Attention	Attention is a cognitive process that allows people to focus on a specific stimulus in the environment
Body language	This is a natural way that a person interacts with others without talking to them. It shows the other person if it is a comfortable situation or not.
Bridge Builder:	Creating and maintaining a safe and open environment for sharing ideas. Where other people see differences, the facilitator should find and use similarities to establish a foundation for building bridges to consensus.
Bully	Someone who takes undue credit
Catalyst	A person makes possible the transformation of input (ideas, opinions) to desired outcome (refined ideas, decisions, strategies, etc.) without being an active part of the conversation herself.
Causal chain	The links between the beginning and end effect of a problem.
Clairvoyant	Throughout the session, facilitators are attuned to signs of strain, weariness, aggravation, and disempowerment, and respond in advance to prevent dysfunctional behavior.
Coach	S/he helps the group form a constructive way of working together, identify its needs and wishes, and reach the outcome they would jointly like to achieve.
Collective action	The action of the group of individuals working together as a team that will move them toward achieving their shared goal.
Collective and shared goal	A situation or condition that is the desired result of the intervention and is agreed upon by all participating stakeholders.
Conductor	A person guides the participants; a system is organically created wherein the facilitator helps every individual comply with the agreed-upon rules and norms to be followed.
Continuous record	Information that is recorded on an ongoing basis so that every change is in the same place to be reviewed later.
Diagnosing	The ability to define the actual problem from diverse inputs
Development	A process in which someone or something changes from one state to another to improve the situation.
Empathizing	The ability to pick up implicit messages and put the people in the learner's shoes when a problem is viewed.

<b>GLOSSARY</b>	
<b>Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Empathy	Person's ability to understand from another person's perspective what they are experiencing.
Facilitation	The process of helping individuals and groups of people identify their objectives and find ways of addressing difficult challenges to achieve their goals.
Feedback	The information that is given about a situation that can tell you if a change was positive or negative.
Free rider	Work hard on their own but limit their contributions in group situations
Goal	The purpose or intention of the multi- stakeholder engagement.
Groupthink	When people place a desire for consensus above their desire to reach the right decision.
Guide	Knowing the steps of the process the group will execute from beginning to end and carefully guiding the participants through each step in turn.
Guide:	Knowing the steps of the process the group will execute from beginning to end and carefully guiding the participants through each step in turn a productive group discussion and challenge the group when appropriate.
Human capital	The knowledge and skills that a group has that is of value to an organization or collective.
Ice breaker	A short group activity or something the facilitator says to the group at the beginning of a meeting to make everyone feel more comfortable working as a group.
Imagination	A creative way a person thinks of ideas by thinking of how a situation might be different if they changed the way they do a thing.
Inspiration	When you are faced with a problem and you suddenly think of a good idea that you are excited to use to solve the problem.
Interface	The meeting point of different parts of a system.
Joker	A person introduces humor at inappropriate times
Key stakeholders	People who are important within or to an organization, agency or institution engaged in an effort (people who can devise, pass, and enforce laws and regulations that may either fulfil the goals of your effort or directly cancel them out).
Leading questions	Questions that you ask to encourage people to think about a specific topic and give you the information that you need about the topic.
Leverage point	A place in a system's structure where a solution element can be applied.
Mission	Clearly defines 'who, what how and why' of the multi-stakeholder arrangement.
Motivator	From the rousing opening statement to the closing words of cheer, the facilitator ignites a fire within the group, establish momentum, and keep the pace.
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GLOSSARY	
Word	Definition
	pace.
Negator	A person is often critical to others
Observing	Keeping eyes what is happening
Open-ended questions	Questions that are answered with details, not only yes or no.
Peacemaker	Although it is generally better to avoid direct confrontations, should it happen, it will be better to step in quickly to re-establish order and direct the group toward a constructive resolution.
Perception	Perception is a cognitive process that allows people to take in information through their senses (sensation) and then utilize this information to respond and interact with the world.
Perceptions	How an individual understands the world around them based on what they know.
Possibility questions	Questions that you ask, to imagine how things will be after a challenge is resolved.
Power relations	The interaction between more powerful and less powerful members in a group or organization.
Powerful members	Individuals in a community or organization who have the most influence on what decisions are made for the benefit of the group.
Stakeholder	A stakeholder is a person, or group of persons, with an interest or concern in a particular process due to direct or indirect involvement.
Primary stakeholders	People or groups that are directly affected by the intervention (targets and beneficiaries of the intervention).
Probing questions	Questions that you ask for more specific information so that a deeper understanding can be developed about the topic.
Questioner	Listening carefully to the discussion and quickly analyze comments to formulate questions that help guide
Root cause analysis	The process of finding out where a problem started, to find a way to solve it.
Secondary stakeholders	People or groups that are indirectly affected by the intervention (directly involved with or responsible for beneficiaries or targets of an intervention).
Self-awareness	Being aware of one's own thoughts, emotions, motivations, strengths and weaknesses. It is important for a facilitator to be self-aware to evaluate the situation in a meeting or contact session.
Self-regulation	The ability to be aware of, and control facilitator's own thoughts, emotions and behaviour so that he can change them to adjust to a specific situation.
Shared vision	The vision a group or organization has decided on which will guide their decisions and choices to move them toward the common goal.
Social capital	The social relationships and networks within a group or organization that enhances the function of the whole.
Stakeholder	An individual or organization, which may directly or indirectly be affected or have an effect on the intervention being undertaken.

<b>GLOSSARY</b>	
<b>Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Stakeholder analysis	The process of working out stakeholder interest and influence to plan for appropriate engagement.
Structure	The way parts of a system are connected to form a whole.
Systemic	Something that has an effect on most or all of a system.
Taskmaster:	Facilitators are ultimately responsible for keeping the session on track. This entails tactfully cutting short irrelevant discussions, preventing detours, and maintaining a consistent level of detail throughout the session.
Time-dependent tasks	Any tasks that must be performed at a specific time of the day, such as farm work, looking after children or school.
Trust	A social phenomenon, which emerges with time and strengthens the relationship between the stakeholders to work together toward a shared goal.
Vision	A description of the ideal future that the multi-stakeholder engagement will work to achieve over time.
PSS	The term “pluralistic service systems” (PSS) refers to diverse RAS systems where a wide range of services are provided by different actors, including public, private, civil society and producer organizations, and funded from different sources.
Networking	Network is to contact different actors for the purpose of exchanging information and building professional relationships
Innovation Brokers:	Teams of specialists that combine a strong background in science with knowledge of business and commercialization and/ or the creation of innovation networks. Innovation brokers are also known as change agents or technology brokers (World Bank 2012).
Partnership	Partnership is joint problem solving, learning, and innovation. May involve a formal contract or memorandum of understanding. May be less formal, such as participatory research. Highly interactive. May involve two or more organizations. Focused, objectively defined project.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background

Development is the process of change and facilitation helps in accelerating this process through the ‘change agents’ or the extension service provider. While working with farmers, agri-traders and processors, facilitation refers to promote group learning, building consensus and enhancing participation in collective actions. A facilitator has multidimensional roles to play.

The module has been prepared to assist facilitators/ trainers engaged in training of agricultural extension and advisory services (EAS) staff and other mediators on facilitation for development by enhancing their knowledge on how to facilitate change in individuals, groups and organizations and also to facilitate multi-stakeholder engagements through brokering strategic partnerships and networking. While working through this module the trainers will find the relevance of facilitation for development in the context of agricultural innovation services (AIS).

### Purpose of this Module

This module is intended for agricultural extension agents and others interested in facilitating the development process in AIS.

### Module Overview

The ultimate aim of agricultural extension professionals is to influence development change in the societies where they work. In the agricultural innovation systems (AIS) context, this change will be stimulated by better relationships between actors. It is therefore imperative that you (as an extension professional) endeavor to develop good facilitation skills to increase your effectiveness.

This training module has been developed to help mid-level as well as field level extension professionals (Agriculture graduates) of various GOs, NGOs and private sector extension service providers for their capacity building in conducting training for facilitators at various levels. Its aim is to provide access to additional skills and knowledge to the extension personnel for efficient facilitation of change process at individual, organization level. The module is subdivided into four units and all the units are made up of a number of sessions, each boarding upon specific topics relevant to facilitation for development in AIS,

This module introduces one to facilitation for development. It covers:

- The relevance of facilitation for development in the context of AIS;
- Facilitating change in groups and organizations;
- Mediation in Strategic Partnerships and Networking; and
- Facilitating multi-stakeholder engagements.

The module has the following units:

Unit 1- Basics of facilitation for development

Unit 2- Facilitating change in individuals, groups and organizations

Unit 3- Mediation in strategic partnerships and networking; and

Unit 4- Facilitating innovation platforms.

All units have been arranged in chronological order starting from introduction leading to discussion, recapitulation and facilitation of learning through participatory discussion, exercise and presentation before the clients at various platforms.

## Module Preparation Procedure

The Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) developed several modules on “New Extension Learning Kit” (NELK) for strengthening the capacities of EAS providers based on global consultations with extension providers and extension trainers those are broadly appreciated globally and considered relevant. Facilitation for Development (F4D) is one such module. Since it is purposely developed as a general training package for both self-learning and training-assisted learning, the NELK module on Facilitation for Development needs to be customized to fit a specific targeted audience and take into account local context in Bangladesh considering policy, farming practices, clients need, trainer’s capacity and modalities of RAS delivery including in-country initiatives and experiences in capacity strengthening.

The Society for Bangladesh Agricultural Extension Network (BAEN) in collaboration with GFRAS and Agricultural Extension in South Asia (AESAS) has hired an individual consultant for customization of the current module. The BAEN organized two workshops on 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 and on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2020 respectively. One week ahead of the 1<sup>st</sup> workshop the GFRAS NELK Module on Facilitation for Development along with a feedback form was shared to all the participants with a request to review the NELK module and fill up the feedback form and to send back the filled in forms. After effective consultations with the participants of the workshop four groups were formed to act in proposed four units of the module and these groups held in meetings and presented their comments and feedbacks. Based on comments received from group exercises and feedbacks from the workshop, the consultant developed a draft outline of the module for Customization and shared it to all the participants including CRISP and BAEN.

In the 2nd workshop, again the consultant shared the draft customized module to all the participants including CRISP and BAEN for their review and comments. Four groups were formed and each group was assigned one unit for review, comments and presentations. Incorporating their comments and feedbacks the final draft of the module was prepared. The draft module was edited by competent resource person. Then the module was finalized and printed.

## How to Use this Training Module

The training module is pitched at two levels, such as-

- a) The field level extension personnel (graduate agricultural extension officers) so that they can improve their expertise in facilitating groups of farmers and other stakeholders for collective decision making.
- b) Middle and senior level extension personnel to improve their expertise in facilitating multi-stakeholder platform and support coordinated multi-agency interaction and problem solving.

The training module has been designed for approximately 25-30 participants. The module is envisioned for those who want to facilitate discussion among various teams and individuals. In the four-day training the participants will learn about tools and techniques to help them develop their own effective and efficient facilitation styles. The trainers/ facilitators whoever use the material and exercises in the module, they can also add locally relevant cases and examples in designing and implementing training programs.

The trainers will need continuous updating the module to address the new material that will sharpen their skills. The topics and techniques described in the module are supplemented by training notes or tips for facilitators. These tools and tips have been provided to help trainers understand why a topic is important or how specific techniques will enhance of the participants.



## Module Performance and Outcomes

The expected outcome of this training module is the development of competent and confident trainers with necessary skills and efficiency to design and implement training programs on facilitation for development. It is needless to mention here that facilitating an effective training program not only involves the understanding the concept of facilitation for development, but also competencies on intrapersonal and interpersonal awareness, techniques of brokering linkages and strategic partnerships, and facilitate innovative platforms for fostering development.

After completing this module, the participants will be able to:

- Explain the concept of facilitation for development as a core function of extension profession in agricultural innovation systems;
- Employ appropriate methods and tools of facilitating change in individuals, groups and organizations;
- Design processes and methods of facilitating Innovation platforms and other multi-stakeholder engagements; and
- Explain the importance of mediating role for strategic partnerships, learning alliances and networks in fostering innovation.

The trainers have to review the materials provided prior to the training and plan the approach appropriate to the topic, the time needed for each session. It is also expected that the extension staff working at the grassroots level if imparted training could effectively work with farmer groups and other stakeholders to achieve better results.



### Tips for the Facilitator

Guiding principles for conducting an effective training program

- Correct selection of participants is vital to the success of any training program.
- Clarity in communicating all aspects of the training program to the participants before they reach the venue is critical.
- This could begin with the introductory invitation letter explaining the purpose of the training and highlighting the importance of attending it.
- Once the participants confirm their availability to attend the training program, it is important to continuously engage their interest by sending them relevant materials, such as the background paper, self-assessment questionnaire, program schedule, and brochure from time to time.
- The logistics should be undertaken by the organizers so that the participants are not hassled by any of the minor details and have no reservations with regard to attending/not attending.

### Welcome and warm up

- Think through what it must be like to be someone coming to the workshop, training or course. What problems or worries are they likely to have? Are there some who will have special problems? What can you do to help them? What can you ask others to do to help?

### Tips on how to record: 'Hope to learn and contribute'

- Invite participants to write on cards what they hope to learn and what they need to contribute. Take serious note of what they hope to learn.

**Tips:** Ask for names to be written on all the cards. This assists you in trying to meet individual needs, and to know who can be called on for what.

Contributions can be great. These can also be too many, or embarrassingly inappropriate. Be cautious. Some ways of handling them are given below.

Tips if objectives are not pre-set

- Start with expectations. If these are on cards or Post-its, let these be grouped and summarized.
- Straight plenary discussion.
- Small groups discuss and report.
- Individual reflection and writing, followed by sharing in small groups, leading to plenary reports.
- Prioritize and select which objectives to address and which to postpone.
- If you can summarize a consensus, well and good. If not, options include leaving differences unresolved.

### What to do when people are constantly late

#### Don't

- Wait for arrival of all in the group.
- Go overtime when it's time to finish activity without asking. If anyone has to leave, they should tiptoe out.

#### Do

- Start when you are expected to start (waiting encourages lateness).
- If you must go beyond the scheduled time, with the approval of participants call a break, so that people can phone home/cancel plans.
- If going overtime is frequent then improve your agenda planning.

Source: IRRI and CRISP, 2020.





**Suggested Outline of the Training Course**

Day 1:		
09:00-09:30	Registration and training kits distribution	
0930 -1030	Introduction to the workshop	
	Self-introduction of the participants	
	Training Objectives and Outcomes	Power Point Presentation
	Pre-evaluation	Simple checklist
1030-1045	Tea break	
Unit 1: Basics of Facilitation for Development		
10:45-11:30	Session-1: Conceptual framework of facilitation for development	
Session Content	Objectives	Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction</li><li>• What is facilitation?</li><li>• Facilitation for development</li><li>• Importance of facilitation as a core function of extension within the AIS</li><li>• Basic principles and techniques of facilitation for development in EAS</li><li>• Facilitation for development in agro-advisory Services</li><li>• The role of facilitator</li><li>• Concluding remarks.</li></ul>	<p>Objectives of the session is to postulate on to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Provide basic ideas of facilitation for development:</li><li>- Its importance in agro-advisory services;</li><li>- Prerequisites and techniques for proper facilitation for development in EAS; and</li><li>- The role of facilitator for development.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Power point presentation</li><li>- White board/flip chart</li><li>- Open discussions/ Q &amp; A</li><li>- Take home notes</li></ul>
11:30-13:00	Session-2: Desired attributes of facilitators for development	
Session Content	Objectives	Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction</li><li>• Attributes of a good facilitator</li><li>• The roles of facilitator</li><li>• The role play exercise (Group work)</li></ul>	<p>The core objectives of the session are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Improve the knowledge level of the participants on attributes of an efficient facilitator for development; and</li><li>- Offer comprehensive understanding about the role of a facilitator in the process of change towards development.</li></ul>	<p>Power point presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Video show</li><li>- Case presentation</li><li>- Card exercise /open discussion</li><li>- Take home notes</li></ul>
13:00-1400	Lunch Break	
14:00-14:45	Session 3: Technical skills of a facilitator for development	
Session Content	Objectives	Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction</li><li>• Who is facilitator?</li><li>• Importance of a facilitator</li><li>• What does a facilitator do?</li><li>• Core competencies of a good facilitator</li><li>• Basics facilitation skills</li><li>• Techniques to be used by a facilitator to optimize facilitation Skills</li><li>• Concluding remarks.</li></ul>	<p>Session objectives of the session are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Expose the participants on the basics of facilitation skills, techniques and tools;</li><li>- The competencies required for effective and efficient facilitation;</li><li>- Improve skills of the participants on facilitation of individuals and groups; and</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- PPT</li><li>- Guest speaker (Expert's deliberation on knowledge and experience of specific topics)</li></ul> <p>Q &amp;A</p>

		- Capacity building of the participants in efficient facilitation.	
Reflection and learning		To assess the learning of the participants	-Participant’s deliberation -Exercises
14:45-15:00	Tea Break		
Unit 2: Facilitating Change in Groups and Organizations			
15:00-15:45	Session 4:Group Facilitation for Agro-advisory Services		
Session content		Objectives	Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction</li><li>• What is group facilitation?</li><li>• Core conditions for facilitative practices</li><li>• Tips for facilitating groups</li><li>• Tasks of facilitator and group facilitation in agro-advisory services</li><li>• Importance of group facilitation</li><li>• Role of facilitators in group formation</li><li>• Principles of group formation and steps in group building</li><li>• Facilitation skills for working with groups</li><li>• Group problems and conflict Management, and</li><li>• Concluding remarks.</li></ul>		<p>The underlying objectives of the session are to-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Enrich participants’ knowledge about group facilitation, its importance in change process towards development in EAS;</li><li>- Familiarize participants with the group dynamics, chemistry of working together achieving common goals;</li><li>- Increase participants’ skills in problem solving and conflict management; and</li><li>- Develop skills for team building issues of working in a team.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- PPT</li><li>- Guest speaker. (Expert’s deliberation on knowledge and experience of specific topics)</li><li>Q &amp;A</li></ul>
15:45-16:30	Session 5: Managing group dynamics and working together		
Session Content		Objectives	Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction</li><li>• Understanding of Group, characteristics of Groups and group/team development</li><li>• Group Dynamics, its importance and key elements of group dynamics</li><li>• Techniques for managing group dynamics</li><li>• Tools for team building &amp; working collectively</li><li>• Conflict management</li><li>• Concluding remarks</li></ul>		<p>Core objectives of the session are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Introduce participants with the groups, its formation techniques, and group building process;</li><li>- Improve knowledge level of participants on group dynamics, strategies for improving group dynamics; and</li><li>- Develop skills of participants in conflict management for better group performance.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- PPT</li><li>- Guest speaker (Expert’s deliberation on knowledge and experience of specific topics)</li><li>Q &amp;A</li></ul>

Day 2		
09:30-11:15	Session 6: Supporting organizational Change Process	
Session Content	Objectives	Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction</li><li>• Organizational change process</li><li>• Building support for needed organizational changes</li><li>• Organizational change management tools and techniques</li><li>• Concluding remarks</li></ul>	The session objectives are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Improve knowledge of the participants about organizational change process tools for organizational change;</li><li>- Discuss on organizational change management process and enhancing performance of organization; and</li><li>- Highlights the issues of leadership development.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- PPT</li><li>- Guest speaker (Expert’s deliberation on knowledge and experience of specific topics)</li></ul> Q &A
11:15-11:30	Tea Break	
Unit 3: Mediation in Strategic Partnerships and Networking		
11:30-12:15	Session 7: Mediation in development of strategic partnerships	
Session Content	Objectives	Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction</li><li>• Managing partnership process</li><li>• Innovation and Innovation Brokering</li><li>• Knowledge mediation</li><li>• Bangladesh’s experience in market-oriented extension services</li><li>• Recommendations for facilitating farm to fork linkages.</li><li>• Concluding remarks.</li></ul>	Session objectives are to provide knowledge to the participants on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Managing strategic partnerships to deliver market oriented extension services;</li><li>- The discuss on innovation and innovation brokering;</li><li>- Identifying critical links to match possible cooperation partner</li><li>- Explain knowledge brokering;</li><li>- Create linkages between markets.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- PPT</li><li>- Guest speaker (Expert’s deliberation on knowledge and experience of specific topics)</li></ul> Q &A
12:15-13:00	Session 8: Learning Alliances and Networking	
Session Content	Objectives	Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction</li><li>• Pluralistic service provisions in AIS</li><li>• Coordination of pluralistic service provisions within the AIS</li><li>• Alliance for effective pluralistic extension services</li><li>• Networking</li><li>• The concept of action learning and reflective practitioners</li><li>• Concluding Remarks</li></ul>	Session objectives are to discuss on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The concept of pluralistic extension system, learning alliance and types of alliances;</li><li>- Network development to provide efficient and demand driven extension services;</li><li>- Innovative extension approaches for leveraging small farmers’ access to the EAS; and</li><li>- To effective alliances and networks in AIS in Bangladesh.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- PPT</li><li>- Guest speaker (Expert’s deliberation on knowledge and experience of specific topics)</li></ul> Q &A
13:00-14:00	Lunch Break	
Unit 4: Facilitating Innovation Platform		
14:00-15:30	Session 9: Visualizing and Facilitating Innovation Platforms	
Session Content	Objectives	Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction</li><li>• Principles innovation platforms (IPs) in agricultural development:</li></ul>	The main objectives of the session are to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-PPT Presentation</li><li>- Group Works</li><li>-Case study</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Core principles of establishing an IP.</li><li>• IPs in agricultural value chain and food systems;</li><li>• Key drivers of an IP and factors contributing to the success of IPs;</li><li>• Functions, benefits and uses of IPs;</li><li>• Facilitation of IPs and objectives of facilitation</li><li>• Generating issues and evidence for policy actions; and</li><li>• Concluding Remarks</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Introduce participants with innovation platforms and its importance in EAS;</li><li>- Provide basic information on the functions, activities and benefits of Using IPs; and</li><li>- Enhance participants’ knowledge and skills on facilitating of IPs in AIS.</li></ul>	- Exercises
15:30-15:45	Tea Break	
15:45-16:30	Continuation of Session 9	
Day 3		
09:30-16:30	Field visit	
Field Activities		Objectives
Fieldwork guide: Do’s and don’ts Divide participants into groups  Provide key questions for exposure visit/ field work.		Filed exposure visit will strengthen participants’ knowledge and to provide them with practical experience on agriculture extension and advisory services and management at the local level including facilitation process in AIS.
- Presentation of reporting outline, -Guiding observations		
Day 4		
09:30-11:30	Group presentation on field visits Recapitulation of training activities and feedback.	
11:30-11:45	Tea Break	
11:45-13:00	Session 10: Multi-stakeholder engagement in AIS	
Session Content		Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction</li><li>• Strategies for multi-stakeholder dialogue</li><li>• Dimensions and factors of stakeholder dialogue</li><li>• Development of collective and shared goals</li><li>• Conditions for effective application</li><li>• Concluding remarks</li></ul>		The objectives of the session are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Introduce participants with multi-stakeholder engagement process delivering effective EAS;</li><li>- Provide basic information on the stakeholder’s dialogue and factors affecting for making successful dialogue with MSEPs; and</li><li>- Enhance their knowledge and skills on Multi-stakeholder engagement processes for facilitation in EAS.</li></ul>
- PPT - Guest speaker (Expert’s deliberation on knowledge and experience of specific topics) Q &A		
13:00-14:00: Lunch Break		
14:00-14:30	Post-evaluation	
To evaluate the progress of knowledge achieving through the training		Questionnaire and Feedback
14:30-14:45	Certificate distribution	
14:45-15:15:	Tea Break	
15:15-16:30	Closing	

## UNIT-1

## BASICS OF FACILITATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

### Overview

The first study unit is the introduction to the art of facilitation for development needed to understand the broad concept of facilitation at various levels of agricultural innovation service. The unit aims to increase the participants' understanding and knowledge in changing process and techniques of facilitation. The unit also highlights the desired attributes and inherent qualities of an efficient facilitator for changing process towards development.

### Objectives

The core objectives of the study unit are to:

- Improve knowledge level of extension personnel so as to enable them to facilitate change process efficiently and effectively;
- Explain the core competencies of facilitators for playing the facilitation role as mentor or coach;
- Explain the role of facilitation for development in extension and agro-advisory services and why extension personnel should understand facilitation;
- Understand the desired attributes of a facilitator for development and how to plan and prepare for facilitation;
- Increase the capability of extension professionals enhances their confidence in undertaking facilitation.

### Outcomes

After completing this study unit, the participants will be able to:

- Explain the conceptual framework of facilitation for development in the context of Agro-advisory services
- Describe the attributes and competencies you will need to become a good facilitator of change by studying the basic principles of facilitation for development; and
- Describe the technical skills of a facilitator.

**Duration:** 4 hours and 30 minutes





## SESSION-1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF FACILITATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

### Session Overview

This session introduces participants to the basics of facilitation and its concepts. The session elucidates the importance and benefits of facilitation in agro-advisory services and pre-requisites for efficient facilitation.

### Session Objectives

Objectives of the session are to postulate;

- Improve the knowledge level of the participants on facilitation and facilitation for development;
- Introduce the participants with basic principles of facilitation for development;
- Describe the role of facilitators in the change process in agriculture;
- Prerequisite for facilitation for development in EAS; and
- Improve their skills and efficiency on use of tools and techniques facilitation in EAS.

### Session Outcomes

After completing this session, the participants will be able to:

- Explain the basics of facilitation and distinguish facilitation and training
- Understand the importance and benefits of facilitation in agro-industry development.
- Know what is facilitation for development?
- Basic principles of facilitation for development
- Role of facilitator
- Discuss the prerequisite of facilitation for development in EAS; and
- Improve the skills and efficiency of participants on use of tools and techniques of facilitation in EAS.

### Introduction

The field of agricultural extension is quite dynamic, where new configurations and alternative extension systems and approaches have been emerging. To cope with the emerging demand driven extension organizations providing rural advisory services need support towards a participatory approach, to shift from the transfer-of-technology (ToT) approach towards a participatory approach, to shift from being an expert to being a facilitator. The growth of a new understanding of extension requires the whole system to adapt, and to appreciate the complementarity between different forms of knowledge. The extension agents should develop themselves to understand the current trends of challenges in the field of agriculture and rural development, how are they affecting the structure, mission and delivery of extension services.

The aim of the session is to improve the understanding level of the participants about facilitation, development as a change process, importance of facilitation in influencing the process in the context of Agricultural innovation system (AIS).

## What is Facilitation?

The word ‘facilitate’ comes from the Latin word ‘facile’ and means ‘to make easy or more convenient’. Facilitation is a process of **helping for** doing something. In other words, facilitation is the act of engaging participants in creating, discovering, and applying learning insights. In contrast to presentation, which is typically characterized by a “sage on the stage” delivering content to an audience, facilitation usually involves a “guide on the side” who asks questions, moderates discussions, introduces activities, and helps participants to learn. This necessary and evolving skill is particularly important for talent development professionals who conduct in-person or virtual training, but other professionals can also use it to facilitate team projects, task forces, committees, and meetings of any type.

It is a learning experience, not merely about content but what to do with it. It involves movement from one point towards an agreed destination. It is a technique used by trainers to help learners acquire, retain and apply knowledge and skills. Participants are introduced to content and then ask questions while the trainer fosters the discussion, takes steps to enhance the experience for the learners, and gives suggestions. They do not, however, do the work for the group; instead, they guide learners toward a specific learning outcome.

While working with farmers, facilitation most often refers to a technique used to promote group learning, build consensus and promote collective action. This is especially important when extension is dealing with issues relating to Natural Resource Management, Linking Farmers to Markets, etc. However, similar facilitation techniques can also be used in meetings or other group settings which demands multi-agency collaboration, for instance, in up scaling climate smart agriculture.

### Box 1.1: What is Facilitation?

- The art of bringing adults together with the learning, by helping adults learn through self-discovery.
- Facilitation is about empowering others.
- It involves letting go of control over the outcome of a process and giving that responsibility to the group.

**Facilitation** is a way of working with people that enables and empowers people to carry out a task or perform an action.

## Facilitation for Development

Development entails change (Ngwenya & Kibwika 2016; Patnaik 2017). Change can be both positive as well as negative. However, it is evident that not every change would lead to development. Development is a process of positive change and ‘change agents’ or the extension advisory service

### Box 1.2: Facilitation for Development Involves:

- a deeper process of helping individuals or groups of people to understand themselves and their role in development;
- putting equal emphasis on both process and content; and
- the ‘art’ of discovering how to unleash people’s ability to learn, reflect, use their skills and potential to achieve their desired goals.

providers (EAS) accelerate the process through facilitation. As development is a continuously changing process and requires facilitation skills in social, cultural and technical context. Facilitation for development is a paradigm of agricultural extension service towards participatory approach away from the expert syndrome (top-down) approach. It empowers the participants for horizontal communication of knowledge, collective actions and enabling process among farmers and rural people, working with groups and thus help them address specific issues.

The field of agricultural extension is quite dynamic and new configurations and alternative extension systems and approaches have been emerging. In this context, the concern is about what are the current trends and challenges in the field of agriculture and rural development and how are they affecting the structure, mission and delivery of extension services and not mere technology transfer through presentation but facilitating knowledge augmentation and skill improvement of farming communities of all

categories through facilitation. Klerkx (2008) shows the conceptual evolution from the technology transfer model to network and systems approaches such as the agricultural knowledge and information systems (AKIS) and, more recently, to the agricultural innovation system (AIS) approach.

**Table 1.1: Extension paradigms at a glance**

Extension paradigms	Key features	Related models and approaches
Transfer of technology	Delivering specific recommendations from research using to-down and persuasive methods to increase agricultural production.	Conventional extension system
Advisory services	Responding to specific farmer inquiries about particular problems, using problem solving or persuasive methods.	-Commodity based system - Market oriented extension approaches; - Agribusiness extension
Non-formal education	Training farmers and rural people, and helping farmers to organize into self-help learning groups.	-Farmer-field schools; - University based extension
Facilitation	-Facilitating horizontal communication, active/collaborative /social learning, -Co-construction of knowledge, collective action, -Empowerment processes among farmers and rural people, and -Working with groups to help them address specific issues.	- Participatory extension - Farming systems Research and extension; - Farmer first; participatory learning and action; - Participatory technology development; - Farmer-led extension; Farmer-field schools; - Farmer networks; Study circles; - Facilitation of local processes; Local development; and - Agro-ecological extension.
Adapted from: Cristóvão (1995), Scarborough et al. (1997), Caporal (2002), Neuchâtel Group (2008), Rivera (2008), Hoffmann et al. (2009), and Swanson and Rajalahti (2010).		

From the above table it is evident that facilitation can help a group improve how they work together, identify and solve problems, make decisions, and handle conflict. The role of the facilitator is to guide the group to work together more efficiently by creating synergy, generating new ideas, and arriving at consensus and agreement. While working with farmers, facilitation refers to technique used to promote learning, building consensus and promote collective actions.

Critically agro-advisory service is apportioning issues relating to natural resource management, linking farmers to markets, etc. Similar facilitation techniques are applied in meeting or other group settings, which calls for multi-disciplinary collaboration.

### **Importance of Facilitation as a Core Function of Extension within the AIS**

Facilitation is essential to successful team and group work. It is also vital to organizational success. It helps in solving conflicts which is quite natural part of working in a team. Organization need people with great facilitation skills. Because without facilitation skills the organization may have risks of stagnation and unhelpful conflict, resulting the person or group that shouts the loudest to get what they want. That is not likely to be the optimal outcome for anyone involved, and it is here that facilitation skills prove their worth.

Modern approach of extension demands involvement of multi-stakeholder's networks of different

sorts in extension work, with emphasis on private profit or non-profit organizations as well as adoption of participatory approaches. Situation demands major focus on changing roles of extension agents away from their present roles as learning-innovation-change facilitators and knowledge brokers. Facilitation improves communication skills, speaking skills and presentation skills of the team members.

In agro-advisory services the farmers are in most cases illiterate and feel shy to express their views on a topic of learning, and participatory techniques of facilitation. According to the International Institute of Facilitation and Change (IIFC), there are five benefits of facilitation (Patrik, V. 2020).



- i) **Facilitation improves meeting outcomes:** Increasing meeting outcomes are one way of increasing the return on investment for meeting. Improving meeting outcomes means results of the meeting enable actions that lead to value for the organization.
- ii) **Facilitation improves meeting efficiency:** Improving meeting efficiency means taking less time to reach a given set of outcomes and reduces the size of the investment needed to get to a certain return.
- iii) **Facilitation manages dysfunctional group behavior professionally:** Dysfunctional behavior by an individual in a group can drastically increase the meeting time, thwart efforts to produce value.

**Box 1.3: Facilitation contact session:**

**Determining Time dependent tasks:**

Any task that must be performed at a specific time of the day such as farm work, looking after children or going to school.

**Agenda:** A list of main topics that should be discussed at a meeting.

- iv) **Facilitation allows the leader to participate in the group work:** Typically, leaders who hire facilitators not only understand the value of collaboration to spark innovation and produce needed change, but they also are great collaborators themselves. Professional facilitators do not engage in group work because they need to stay focused on process leadership in order to achieve the agreed-to meeting outcomes.

**v) Facilitation drives the group to “accountability”:**

Professionally facilitated meetings are highly interactive. The content is generated by the participants themselves. In addition, professionally facilitated meetings have established outcomes that drive informed action following the meeting.

## Facilitation for Development in Agro-advisory Services

The agro-advisory service is a complex phenomenon. It requires knowledge and expertise of the extension agent in psychology, philosophy, sociology, economic condition culture of the society where the clients live and finally technical knowledge and expertise in agriculture. For effective facilitation for development in agriculture needs some essential conditions and these are as follows:

- **Qualifications Skills and expertise of the facilitator:** The skills and expertise required to become an effective facilitator, capable of operating in a wide variety of situations.
- **Suitable structure and framework:** A structure and framework to help introduce a facilitated approach to improvement, innovation and change in an organization.



- **Practical and usable tools and techniques:** A range of practical and usable tools and techniques can help facilitate groups to handle uncertainty; as well as provide processes to enable the group to solve problems and develop answers to key questions.
- **Group management skills:** The change agents should have sufficient knowledge and expertise in managing, leading and facilitating project team members and enable them to identify key issues and develop solutions by accurately defining the objectives of a project or program.
- **Complementing other professional:** How to complement all other professional with skills which produce results faster and more effectively?

### Techniques of Facilitation for Development in EAS

Before beginning the facilitation contact session, it is the job of a facilitator to create this safe space by setting some rules on how the facilitation contact session will be structured. It is important to make sure that everyone understands these rules and respects them. It will be especially helpful to you in a large group. Make sure everyone understands that each person must be allowed to speak without interruption. Tell the participants that there will be time to ask questions after the person has finished speaking. If someone breaks these rules, it is up to the facilitator to remind the person of the rules and to let the speaker finish. Facilitator's role is to make sure that everyone has a fair chance to say something especially helpful in a large group. Each participant must be allowed to speak without interruption. The facilitator/moderator of the meeting tells the participants that there will be time to ask questions after the person has finished speaking. Facilitator's role is to ensure that everyone has a fair chance to say something.





Facilitation for development is not a ‘doctor model’, where the change agent prescribes what people should do; but rather a ‘therapy model’, where a facilitator helps people to reflect on their lives.

The basic principles of facilitation include:

- Planning and preparation
- Creating a setting where participants feel comfortable;
- Neutrality;
- Listening; and
- Motivation.

### Planning and Preparation

It is helpful for the facilitator to prepare before the facilitation contact session with the individual or group to have an idea of what will need to be address during the meeting. To prepare a facilitation contact session it is necessary to identify the individual or the group will be meeting with. It is important to think about when the best time would be to have the facilitation contact session to allow people with time dependent tasks to be available to meet with the facilitator

Having an agenda or general plan of the facilitation contact session will allow the facilitator to decide how much time need to be spend on each topic and help to manage the time for a group discussion to make sure that everyone at the facilitation contact session has a fair chance to talk about their challenges or to make suggestions. It is wise to leave enough time so that anything that is not on the agenda can be discussed after all other points on the list have been addressed.

### Creating a Setting where Participants Feel Comfortable

For a successful facilitation, contact session or group meeting to be successful, so that each participant feels comfortable enough to share that everyone understands these rules and respects them. It will be especially helpful in a large group. Each participant must be allowed to speak without interruption. The facilitator/moderator of the meeting tells the participants that there will be time to ask questions after the person has finished speaking. Facilitator’s role is to ensure that everyone has a fair chance to say something.

### Neutrality

Listening is to give attention to sound or action (oxforddictionaries.com). The act of listening involves complex affective, affective, cognitive, and behavioral process (Halone *et.al.* 1998). A system such as AIS is made up of a diverse group of people or stakeholders. The facilitator should be aware about adjusting the level of the individual or group. The facilitator should not take sides in a discussion and honestly remain neutral and remind the participants to talk about the problem and not to make things personal and to find solution to a problem through keeping things objective.

### Listening

Listening is to give attention to sound or action (oxforddictionaries.com). The act of listening involves complex affective, affective, cognitive, and behavioral process (Halone *et.al.* 1998). There are two types of listening that may be used when facilitating development. These are active listening and reflective listening. When a person concentrates to what someone is saying to understand and remember what is heard, it is termed as active listening. This is an important skill for a facilitator as because he or she will have to listen to people’s problems or suggestions and use the information to help them develop a problem-solving plan with these suggestions. When the listener just repeats what have been told and thus confirm what have been told to understand something correctly, it is termed as reflective listening. During contact session the facilitator should use this reflective listening which is an important tool for a facilitator to make sure there are no misunderstandings in a meeting or contact session.

## Motivation

According to David and Anderzej (2010), motivation can be understood as cognitive decision making in which the intention is to make the behavior that is aimed at achieving a certain goal through initiation and monitoring.

Motivation may be due to outside factors (extrinsic) e.g. rewards or within an individual (intrinsic), like desire to do better. Motivation is the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviour. It is what causes someone to act. It involves the biological, emotional, social, and cognitive forces that activate behavior. To keep a meeting or contact session running smoothly, it is important to encourage the individual or members of a group to think about positive outcomes. Instead of letting people just complain about problems, the facilitator must guide participants to think about how they can begin to make the changes to find a solution to their problem. If they find solution they will be happy with and then will be active in implementing change.

Motivating the individual or the group to be part of the development process will help them learn how to solve problems that they may have in a positive way. Positive attitude will also encourage people to think of creative ideas to solve problems on their own. If properly motivated people will keep moving towards the solution to the problem.



## Facilitation Competencies

There are six core competencies that are needed for facilitation. These are:

- Create collaborative relationships;
- Plan appropriate group processes;
- Create and sustain a participatory environment;
- Guide groups towards appropriate and useful outcomes;
- Build and maintain professional knowledge;
- Model a positive professional attitude.

However, the main concern facing us is whether we have these competencies or not. We know that our education and training often focus on downward communication (e.g., communicating about pest management to farmers). Then how do we develop these? Some of the mechanisms for developing facilitation skills include:

- Becoming aware of the importance of these skills during training/education;
- Reading, watching and reflecting;
- Learning by doing; practice, practice and practice;
- Coaching by 'mentors';
- Learning from practitioners.

### Box 1.4: Tips for Facilitator

- The facilitator should set the scene for the four-day training by introducing the objectives of the training, and emphasizing the need for facilitation in agricultural development.
- The facilitator should guide the participants in a participatory exercise to establish a few do's and don'ts (for instance, keeping mobile phones on silent mode) for the duration of the training so as to ensure optimum utilization of time and resources.
- He/she should apprise the participants that this training program is directed at gaining adequate expertise in assisting farmers and other actors (both core and supporting) to become effective facilitators.

This implies that facilitation needs skills. We must be cognizant to develop these. This will help us to be a good facilitator and thus, an effective trainer. Facilitation is a practice that requires skills. Given below is a list of skills that are normally considered necessary for effective facilitation. These are:

1. **Listening** carefully to the verbal communication. Whenever we are listening, we need to pick up both positive and negative aspects of situations. It will help us in diagnosing problems, difficulties and tensions, and thus, in facilitating the training process.
2. **Observing:** Keeping our eyes open to what is happening around us. Understanding non-verbal communication. We need to remember that we are observing objectively in order to monitor the group's work.
3. **Empathizing:** The ability to pick up implicit messages and to put ourselves in the learners' shoes whenever we are viewing a problem. Trying to empathize with the feelings, ideas and values of our clients/beneficiaries.
4. **Diagnosing:** The ability to define the actual problem from diverse inputs we might be getting/receiving from the group about the problem. Based on our analysis, we should be able to select practical alternatives and intervene. While doing so, we should be aware that we are constantly being watched by the learners.
5. **Supporting/encouraging:** The ability to provide verbal and nonverbal messages of encouragement, appreciation, affirmation and caring. Being participative in problem solving.
6. **Challenging:** Posing challenging questions to the learners for defining or analyzing problems. Sometimes to probe further, we need to challenge the learners, their values and norms. It is not easy. In this process we might say something to the learners which might disturb them initially. We might have to confront or disagree, or even stop a process. We should not hesitate to do so, but be polite and firm at the same time. However, we shouldn't be rude to the learners. This hampers the learning process and breaks trust.

7. **Openness:** Being open to the learners. Our ability to receive feedback and act on it will definitely help us in being good facilitators. Our readiness/ flexibility/self-reflection to re-examine our attitudes, values and ideas and changing them, if necessary, determines our success in holding dialogues with learners.
8. **Modeling:** The ability to respond spontaneously without being idealistic. Not presenting oneself as an expert. (Ngwenya & Kibwika 2016; Schwarz 2017; UN Online Training 2018).

Good facilitation and empowering others demand action, reflection, learning and change, which is constant. A good facilitator for development should:

- Be able to design their own processes;
- Know which facilitation tools and techniques to use in any situation;
- Use the art of questioning and probing;
- Know process observation and documentation; and
- Use visualization.

### Structure of the Facilitation Techniques

The conceptual understanding of facilitation is stumbled in four dimensions. The ingredients of facilitation techniques are- **Type of Input**, a facilitator working with, **The structure** i.e. the way the information is structured (list on flip chart, map, matrix model or categories, phases of **Information processing**- brainstorming, organizing concepts, vote for information, revising and improving and making decision based on information shared by the group and finally different **modes of interaction** i.e., doing a number of steps of a collaboration process in a plenary session or done individually.

With these four dimensions one can compose effective collaboration techniques that fit the task, the group the process and the complexity of the context.

#### Techniques of facilitation of meeting

There are 10 techniques of facilitation of a meeting. These are:

- i) **Beginning meeting with a quick check-in:** Check-ins encourage everyone in the room to focus on the meeting and each other.
- ii) **Review desired outcomes and agenda item:** A review of the desired outcomes and agenda items may get the group aligned toward accomplishing the meeting goal.
- iii) **Assign meeting roles: the facilitator may ask others to take on different roles- note taker, time keeper, etc.:** Providing meeting participants with opportunities to help creates a communal responsibility to make the meeting a success.
- iv) **Practice active listening:** Active listening includes four steps:
  - **Contact:** Listen to each participant attentively and reinforce what is being said by maintaining eye contact or non-verbal responses.
  - **Absorb:** Take in what each person says as well as their body language without judgment or evaluation.
  - **Feedback:** Paraphrase and summarize what the speaker says back to the speaker.
  - **Confirm:** Get confirmation from the speaker that you understand their points accurately
- v) **Take stack:** When multiple participants want to speak at the same time, manage the process by jotting down the names of people who have something to say and letting each individual speak, one at a time, without interruption.

**Facilitation contact session:** Also known as a group meeting.

**Time dependent tasks:** Any task that must be performed at a specific time of the day such as farm work, looking after children or going to school.

**Agenda:** A list of main topics that should be discussed at a meeting.



**vi) Synthesize the main themes to reframe the conversation:** Sometimes several different conversation themes emerge simultaneously in a meeting. When this happens, the facilitator needs to get everyone on the same page before moving forward.

**vii) Pause and allow for reflection:** Once the main subject has emerged, pause and provide time for silent reflection. Ideally, ask participants to write down their thoughts to help internalize what's been said and to identify concerns or questions free of the influence of others' opinions.

**viii) Encourage and balance participation:**

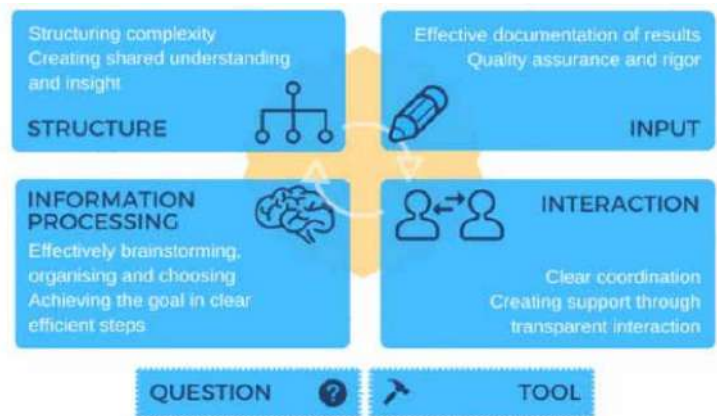
The facilitator should always be aware that some group members may be less vocal than others, and their voices are still important. The facilitator should create a safe space for them to engage through asking open-ended questions to draw people out:

- “What do you think?”
- “What would you do?”; and
- “What other ideas are you considering?”

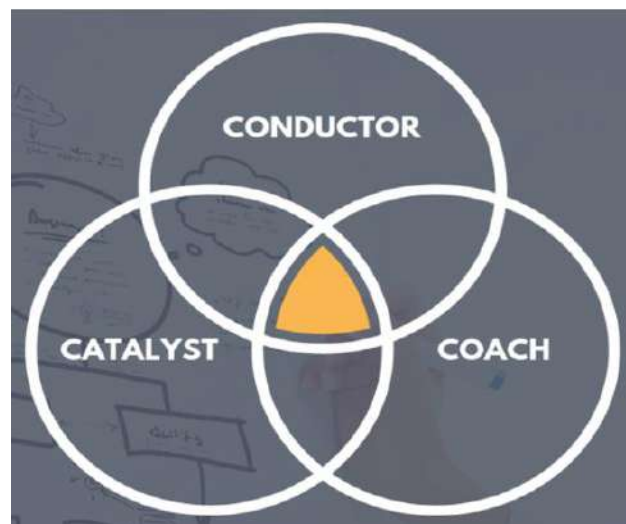
Participants may be divided into small groups for discussion to encourage participation from shyer team members and then bringing every one back to the full group and asking for conversation.

**ix). Take a break and re-energize:** When the energy in the room is low, or when people become restless, it will be wise to take a short break. Longer meetings require even more break time.

**x). Providing closure:** At the end of the meeting it is to be sure that all decisions, tasks, and next steps are documented in detail so that everyone knows how to follow through. Restating the key outcomes verbally helps the group feel a sense of accomplishment. Asking participants to verbally check-out gives people a space to express final questions or concerns and creates meeting closure.



**Figure 1.1:** Four dimensions of facilitation (Source: Kolfshoten 2016)



**Figure 1.2: Role of facilitator**

<https://www.sessionlab.com/blog/facilitation- skills/>

## The Roles of Facilitator

The facilitator has a wide range of tasks to perform in order to ‘make things easier’ for people who participate in a facilitated discussion, A facilitator has a wide range of tasks to perform in order to ‘make things easier’ for people who participate in a facilitated discussion:

- Support individuals within a group in understanding their common objectives.
- Help people collectively move through a process.

- Structure conversations and apply appropriate **group facilitation techniques** to keep discussions effective.
- Foster participation and get people to come up with ideas, thoughts and perspectives that add value.
- Get all individuals in the room to feel like they are in a group with a shared interest.

A facilitator can be perceived as:

- A **‘catalyst’** for discussion: She makes possible the transformation of input (ideas, opinions) to desired outcome (refined ideas, decisions, strategies, etc.) without being an active part of the conversation herself.
- A **‘conductor’** of an orchestra: She synchronizes all the musicians (group participants), optimally guiding the use of their instruments toward the desired result – a harmonic musical expression of the musicians’ complex interactions, creativity, and expertise. As the “conductor” guides the participants, a system is organically created wherein the facilitator helps every individual comply with the agreed-upon rules and norms to be followed. In this way, her efforts enable each person in the “orchestra” to create something greater than them.
- A **‘coach’**: she helps the group form a constructive way of working together, identify its needs and wishes, and reach the outcome they would jointly like to achieve.





## The Roles of a Facilitator in Group Approach

By definition, a facilitator is “a person that makes an action or process easy or easier.” If ever there was an insufficient definition for something, this is it. Effective facilitators have to wear many hats in any given session. The role encompasses presentation abilities, training abilities, people skills, project management and more.

This person has to keep the group focused, take them deeper with a topic, and (sometimes) keep a potentially volatile situation at bay. This is a dynamic role in which the facilitator is delivering important content and helping to engage productive interactions without necessarily knowing as much as the individuals he or she is facilitating. A facilitator thus enables movement towards change, enables a group of people to solve complex problems. Facilitator's role is to guide the group to work together more efficiently by creating synergy, generating new ideas and attaining at consensus. A facilitator has a wide range of tasks to perform in order to make things easier' for people who participate in a facilitated discussion:

**Maintaining Focus** – to keep the participants on track with the information/ task at hand,

**Maintaining the Environment** – to create and maintain a safe, positive learning environment

**Being Neutral** – treat all contributions from participants fairly and equally, ensure students are not favored or ignored and that the information they have presented is correct, and

**Offering Encouragement** – to all participants to engage and contribute.

**Enhancing Participation** – to encourage all participants to engage in the learning process,

## Role of a Facilitator in Group Approach

The role of the facilitator depends upon the needs of the group/client. What kind of assistance the group/client needs determines the movement of the extension personnel between one or more facilitative roles. Extension agents should facilitate farmers to:

### Case-1.1: Mango producers collectively increased their market linkages and raised income

Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS) is a global partnership on capacity development for agricultural innovation systems launched in 2015 with the objective of to make agricultural innovation systems more efficient and sustainable in meeting the demands of farmers, agri-business and consumers. This will help improve food security. CDAIS operates in eight pilot countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The capacity development interventions in these eight countries are demand-driven and integrate development of individual competencies and organizational capacities with policy dialogues

In Bangladesh, CDAIS activities was started with the training of 17 National Innovation Facilitators of different NICHE group such as mango, pineapple, fish, tomato and poultry. Finally, three NICHES' were selected for the implementation in field level. These project activities were totally different of other projects implemented before in Bangladesh. Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI), *Agrinatura*, Natural Resource's Institute (NRI) were the implementing partners.

The project mainly focused on to improve their functional skills. At the beginning stakeholders were identified and trained them to improve their skill on mutual cooperation, leadership, motivation, ties, conflict management, production and development. Then a mango farmers group was formed in 14 at Shibganj upazila and established “Shibganj Mango Producer Cooperative Society” for making partnership initiatives.

CDAIS supported an exposure visit of the leaders of the society and local extension and marketing officers to Thailand for observing exportable mango production, postharvest handlings and marketing systems organizing producers' groups. After coming back from Thailand the societies leased a land and established office, ware house, meeting room, ripening room and keep some space free to set up other facilities for business operations. In 2020, the group members marketed 130 metric tons in domestic and 70 metric tons of mangoes in international markets. Now, they are linked with many online buyers. Super shops like Swapno, Agrora and Mina Bazar etc.

- Organize themselves (e.g., Farmer/Common Interest Groups [FIGs/CIGs], Producer Organizations [POs], Farmer Producer Companies [FPCs] and Farmers Marketing Groups (FMGs);
- Access markets, including direct sales to consumers (e.g., direct marketing);
- Link to services (e.g., credit, marketing, insurance, etc.); and
- Access government schemes (subsidies, infrastructure support, knowledge, machinery).
- Help a group find new ways of thinking about and analyzing their situation.
- A facilitator does not know all the answers but helps the group think critically about their own needs and interests, and to make decisions for themselves.
- Encourage each member of the group to contribute to the best of their ability since everyone has valuable knowledge and a valuable contribution to make.
- To build trust and respect between the members of the group and to encourage dialogue and learning, from which the whole group will benefit.

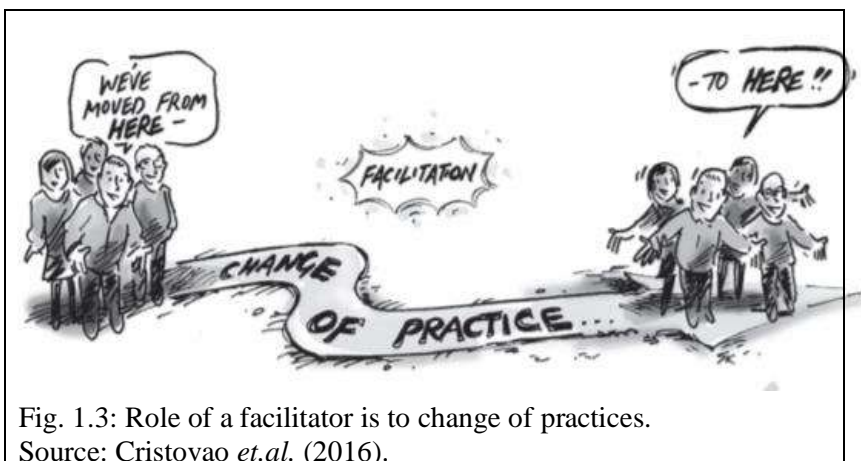


Fig. 1.3: Role of a facilitator is to change of practices.  
Source: Cristovao *et.al.* (2016).

In short, a good facilitator is focused on the topic at hand, the interaction process and participants, and the optimal path to reach the objective. This is a complex balancing act that requires numerous skill sets. There are eight distinct identified roles that a facilitator is likely to play during a session and these are as follows.

**Motivator:** From the rousing opening statement to the closing words of cheer, the facilitator ignites a fire within the group, establish momentum, and keep the pace.

**Questioner:** Listening carefully to the discussion and quickly analyze comments to formulate questions that help guide a productive group discussion and challenge the group when appropriate.

**Bridge Builder:** creating and maintaining a safe and open environment for sharing ideas. Where other people see differences, the facilitator should find and use similarities to establish a foundation for building bridges to consensus.

**Clairvoyant:** Throughout the session, facilitator is attuned to signs of strain, weariness, aggravation, and disempowerment, and responds in advance to prevent dysfunctional behavior.

**Peacemaker:** Although it is generally better to avoid direct confrontations, should it happen, it will be better to step in quickly to re-establish order and direct the group toward a constructive resolution.

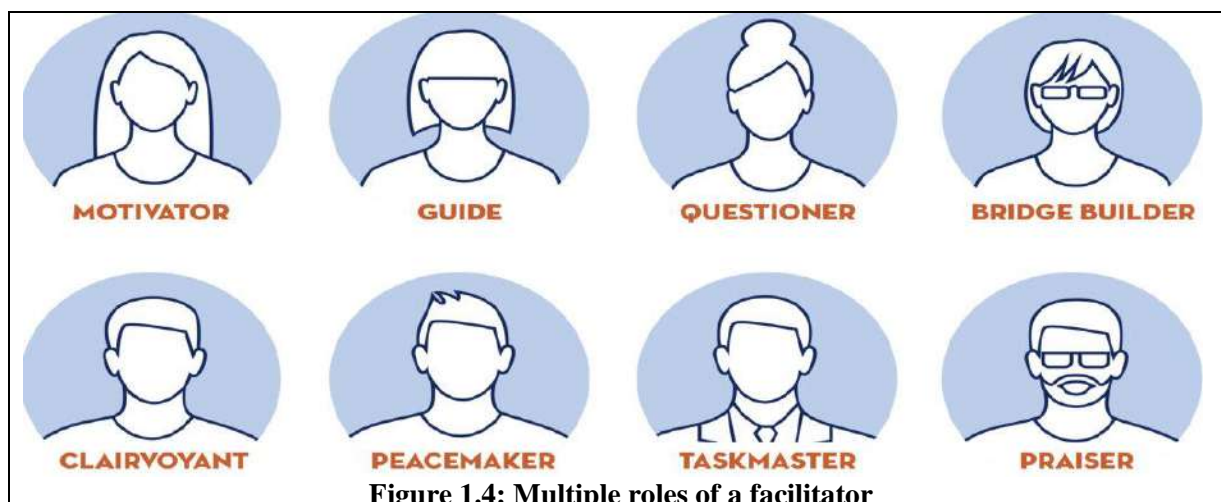
### Box 1.5: Examples of facilitation

#### Example-1

The job of a facilitator as an extension professional is to meet with groups of people and facilitate their development and encourage them to move towards a common goal. Some groups can have people in them who are not afraid to take over the conversation. The facilitator will need to practice being confident to deal with speaking in front of groups as well as making sure that the quieter people in the group get their fair chance to speak.

#### Example-2

As an extremely confident person the facilitators are not afraid to say what he thinks can be strength. An extension professional has to act as a facilitator to individuals and groups. The facilitators to be stay neutral and assertive in the discussion and must learn to listen actively, what people are telling. It is important to make them feel that their knowledge and opinions are important and that they are allowed to challenge the facilitator's ideas in front of groups as well as making sure that the quieter people in the group get their fair chance to speak.



**Taskmaster:** Facilitators are ultimately responsible for keeping the session on track. This entails tactfully cutting short irrelevant discussions, preventing detours, and maintaining a consistent level of detail throughout the session.

**Praiser:** At every opportunity, facilitator should praise participants for good effort, progress, and results – praise well, praise often, praise specifically.

### Concluding Remarks

Extension personnel should act as facilitators rather than as technical experts. This unit tried to create better understanding in extension personnel on facilitation for development, and so enhance their confidence in undertaking facilitation. It also covered the importance of facilitation in the present job setting of extension personnel – support group learning, encourage collective actions and build consensus. To conclude, this unit attempted to equip extension personnel on how to plan and prepare facilitation for development.

### Exercise 1

1) What is facilitation?

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

2) Name basic principles of facilitation?

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....3)

List the six core facilitation competencies.

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
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## SESSION-2: DESIRED ATTRIBUTES OF FACILITATORS FOR DEVELOPMENT

### Session Overview

This session introduces participants to the competencies of an efficient facilitator, roles of facilitators in change process to promote development in agricultural extension and rural development. The sessions also focus on practices of facilitation process.

### Session Objectives

The core objectives of the session are to:

- i) Improve the knowledge level of the participants on attributes of an efficient facilitator for development; and
- ii) Offer comprehensive understanding about the role of a facilitator in the process of change towards development.

### Session Outcomes

After completing this session, the participants will be able to:

- Explain the competencies required for efficient facilitation;
- Have self-realization about the attributes of as a facilitator in EAS;
- Explain what is meant by the terms cognitive, emotional and social attributes; and
- Manage the change process individuals as well as groups towards development.

### Introduction

Facilitator for development should have some attributes that enable him to be effective in influencing the change process. Facilitator's responsibility is to make a process easier or facilitate a process through adequate planning. A facilitator acts like a guide or mentor to help people move through a process. He guides the participants towards an exploratory journey to learning by helping them to develop into their inner self to realize their strengths and weaknesses, helping them to share their experiences and learning from the experiences of others. In order to effectively drive a group towards cherished goal the facilitator should have some build in competencies. A facilitator helps groups of people to understand their common objectives, assists them to plan how to achieve these objectives and move through a process together. The attributes of efficient extension personnel are described in the following paragraphs.

#### Box 2.1: Some tips for facilitation

**Root cause analysis:** The process of finding out where a problem started to find a way to solve it.

**Causal chain:** The links between the beginning and end effect of a problem.

**Inspiration:** When you are faced with a problem and you suddenly think of a good idea that you are excited to use to solve the problem.

**Imagination:** A creative way a person thinks of ideas by thinking of how a situation might be different if they changed the way they do something.

## Attributes of a Good Facilitator

Attribute is the quality or feature regarded as a characteristic or inherent part of someone or something. It is quality or characteristic inherent in or ascribed to someone or something. Attribute also regard something being caused by someone or something.

The APPLE technique is often applied. The acronym for APPLE is the following. Apart from the above-mentioned skills, a good facilitator should be receptive and should be able to develop new skills as and when required depending on the participating group and should be open to ideas.

### Box 2.2: Apple technique of facilitation

A: Asking the question  
 P: Pausing for allowing participants to comprehend the question and think of any answer  
 P: Picking a member to provide the answer  
 L: Listening to the answer  
 E: Elaborating on the answer obtained.

Attributes are basically of three types:

- a) Cognitive attributes;
- b) Emotional attributes; and
- c) Social attributes.

Facilitators should possess good probing skills through open ended and closed ended questions. The manner of questioning in terms of timing and accurate delivery is extremely important.

### a) Cognitive attributes

Cognition is defined as ‘the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses. These cognitive processes include thinking, knowing, remembering, judging, imagination, perception, and planning

It is in essence, the ability to perceive and react, process and understand, store and retrieve information, make decisions and produce appropriate responses. Cognitive functioning is therefore critical for day-day-day life, governing our thoughts and actions. We need cognition to help us understand information about the world around us and interact safely with our environment, as the sensory information we receive is vast and complicated: cognition is needed to distill all this information down to its essentials. There are many different types of cognitive processes. These include:

- **Attention:** Attention is a cognitive process that allows people to focus on a specific stimulus in the environment.
- **Language:** Language and language development are cognitive processes that involve the ability to **understand** and express thoughts through spoken and written words. It allows us to communicate with others and play an important role in thought.
- **Learning:** Learning requires cognitive processes involved in taking in new things, synthesizing information, and integrating it with prior knowledge.
- **Memory:** Memory is an important cognitive process that allows people to encode, store, and retrieve information. It is a critical component in the learning process and allows people to retain knowledge about the world and their personal histories.
- **Perception:** Perception is a cognitive process that allows people to take in information through their senses (sensation) and then utilize this information to respond and interact with the world.
- **Thought:** Thought is an essential part of every cognitive process. It allows people to engage in decision-making, problem-solving, and higher reasoning.

Cognitive attributes include:

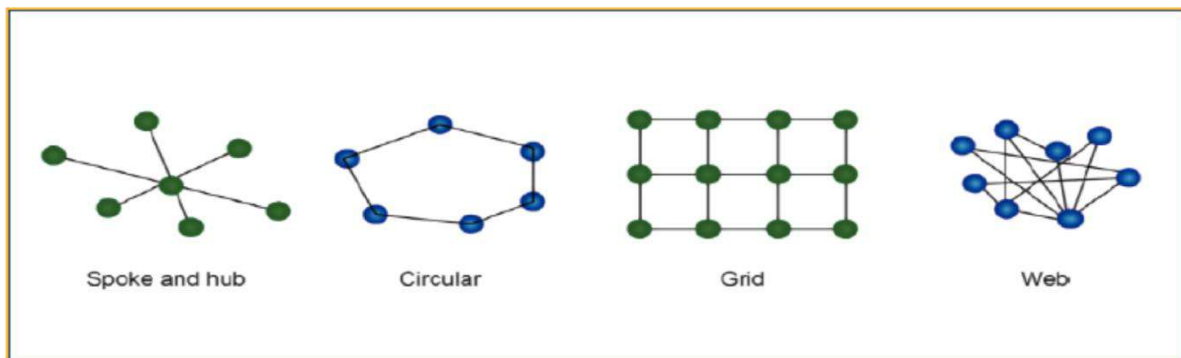
- Systematic thinking
- Critical thinking
- Lateral thinking.



These attributes deal with system perspectives and process. These are about understanding how systems operate, how see the bigger picture and how to be able to help influence those systems in a more effective way. AIS are a complex system and are composed of parts and connections. Facilitating change with AIS means the facilitator must frame of mind that understands complexities.

### i) Systematic thinking

System thinking is one of the critical arts by which one can analyze the relationship between parts, the system and how it all relates to the environment. This understanding can improve decision making. Systems thinking uses analysis, structure and leverage points to solve a problem. Analysis is a process of breaking down a complex problem or issue into smaller parts to gain better understanding of it. If we look of bread, as a whole it is unimaginable that a person can finish it. But when cut into slices, a person eats one slice after another and finishes a loaf without noticing. Structure is the way different parts are connected to form a whole and connection determines how the parts work together. This is what determines how the system behaves as a whole. The connection determines how the parts work together. This is what determines how the system behaves as a whole. The most important thing about a system is how it is structured. Figure 2.1 shows an example of popular structure patterns. The structures and the connections of parts influence power relations. Imagine each of the points is an actor in the AIS and each of the connecting lines is how each actor relates to the others. Knowing how the actors are connected will help you decide how to structure your plans for change because it will tell you where the most influence is needed. Understanding these within an AIS and other organizations is crucial for facilitation for development.



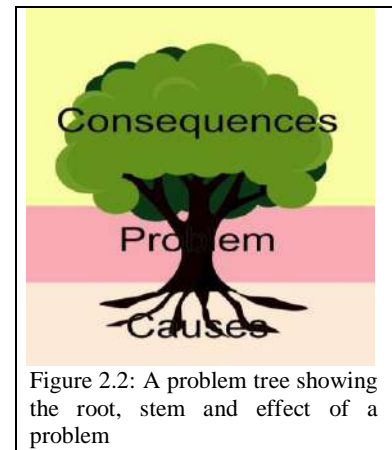
**Figure 2.1: Popular structure patterns**

In social problems, systemic means originating from the structure of the system in such a manner as to affect the behavior of most or all social agents of certain types, as opposed to originating from individual agents. In systems thinking, the leverage point is a place in a system's structure where a solution element can be applied. A low leverage point is when a small amount of change force causes a small change in system behavior.

### ii) Critical thinking

Critical thinking is thinking about a problem from a neutral point of view to form an opinion about it based on facts and not emotions. As an extension professional, it is your job to approach a problem from a neutral point of view. This means you can find a solution fast because time is spent on finding a solution rather than trying to find someone or something to blame. Any problem or issue has a root, a stem and an effect. It can be thought of as a problem tree, like the one shown in Figure 2.2.

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The root cause of any given problem is often not seen, but the most important part in finding solutions. The purpose of root cause analysis is to strike at the root of a problem by finding and resolving its root causes. This goes beyond just dealing with the symptoms of the problem.

Thinking about the problem in a step-by-step way makes it easier to understand what the best solution will be. Finding solutions to problems or challenges quickly make the system run smoothly and keep the actors who benefit from the system satisfied.

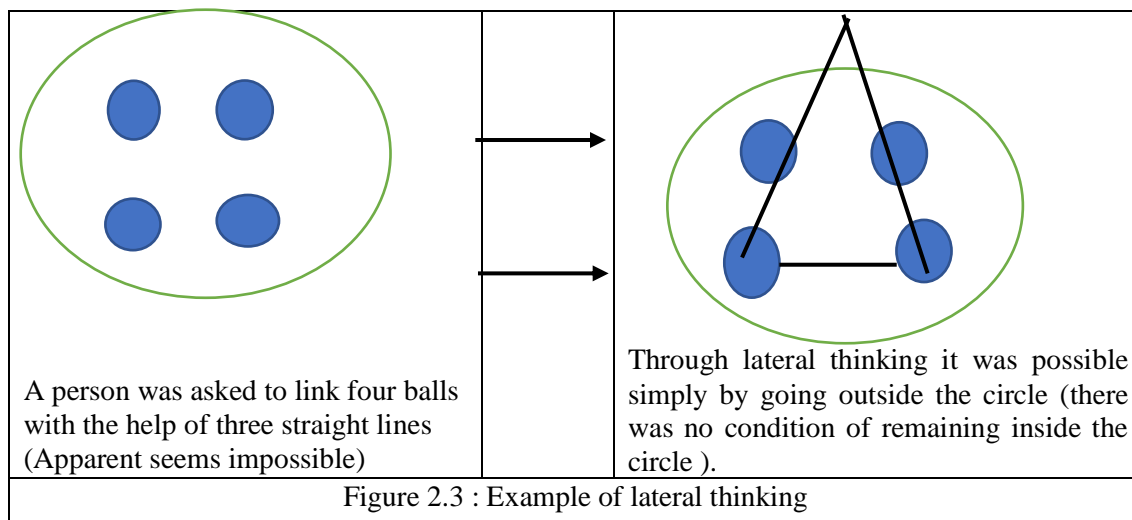
### iii) Lateral thinking

Lateral thinking is a manner of solving problems using an indirect and creative approach via reasoning that is not immediately obvious. It involves ideas that may not be obtainable using only traditional step-by-step logic. Edward de Bono (2014) links lateral thinking with humor, arguing there's a switch -over from a familiar pattern to a new, unexpected one. It is the moment of surprise, generating laughter and new insight, which facilitates the ability to see a different thought pattern, which initially was not obvious. According to Edward de Bono, lateral thinking deliberately distances itself from the standard perception of creativity as "vertical" logic, the classic method for problem solving.

Unlike critical thinking lateral thinking focuses more on the "movement value" of statements and ideas, when critical thinking is primarily concerned with judging the true value of statements and seeking errors. A person uses lateral thinking to move from one known idea to new ideas. Edward de Bono defines four types of thinking tools:

- i) **Idea-generating tools** intended to break current thinking patterns- routine patterns, the status quo.
- ii) **Focus tools** intended to broaden where to search for new ideas.
- iii) **Harvest tools** intended to ensure more value is received from idea generating output.
- iv) **Treatment tools** that promote consideration of real-world constraints, resources, and support.

The lateral thinking is thinking beyond the periphery of perception circle. In the following figure 2.3-A, there are four boxes, and one is asked to join the four boxes with only three straight lines. Without lateral thinking it can't be solved. It is a way of looking at a problem or situation in a new and creative way. Facilitator need **inspiration** and **imagination** when using lateral thinking to solve a problem.



How is lateral thinking useful as an extension professional in facilitation in the AIS context? It will be the job of a facilitator to encourage the individual or group you are helping to imagine how a solution to a problem will make their situation better. By encouraging them to be creative in imagining a positive outcome, rather than focusing only on the problem, you will motivate them to put their plans into action.

This will also help give the individual or group many different options on how to make the changes that they need to improve their situation. With more than one solution available, the individual or group can then make their own decision about which plan or change will be best for them.

### Emotional Attributes (Emotional intelligence)

Emotional attributes are how one person deal with his own emotions and how he responds to the emotions of other he interacts with. To be a good facilitator one should be confident, have good self-esteem and be aware of his cultural identity so that he can create a reference base for decision making when facilitating change.

Salovey and Mayer (1990), describe emotional intelligence as the "ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action". Goleman (1998) set out a framework of emotional competencies, which is defined as "a learned capability based on emotional intelligence those results in outstanding performance at work".

#### Box 2.3: Examples of understanding

**Example-1:** How a person will feel when he first visits a community that is different to what he grew up with. He may spend some time talking with the people to learn how they do things in their day-to-day lives and what is expected from each member of the community.

**Example-2:** A man who has never worked in farming before decides to move to a farm and become a farmer. Now it is common sense for a facilitator to help the new farmer what they need to know to be a successful farmer.

The emotional intelligence is made up of: Common sense, Empathy, Self-awareness and Self-regulation (Goleman, 1998). There are twenty-one competencies, distributed among four domains, or clusters, of emotional intelligence, being:

**Table 2.1: Competencies or emotional intelligence**

<b>Self-Awareness Cluster</b>	<b>Self-Management Cluster</b>	<b>Social Awareness –</b>	<b>Relationship Management Cluster</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emotional self-awareness</li> <li>- Accurate self-assessment</li> <li>- Self-confidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emotional self-control</li> <li>- Trustworthiness</li> <li>- Conscientiousness</li> <li>- Adaptability</li> <li>- Achievement drive</li> <li>- Initiative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cluster</li> <li>- Empathy</li> <li>- Service orientation</li> <li>- Organizational awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developing others</li> <li>- Influence</li> <li>- Communication</li> <li>- Conflict management</li> <li>- Visionary leadership</li> <li>- Catalyzing change</li> <li>- Building bonds</li> <li>- Teamwork and collaboration.</li> </ul>

**Common sense** is the way a person will interpret, judge and understand things that are considered common knowledge to most people. A person has common sense if he knows how to behave in a certain situation without someone else teaching them this knowledge.

Extension professionals do facilitate people from different backgrounds. It is important to remember that the definition of what is ‘common knowledge’ to someone will change depending on where people grew up or what they were taught from a young age.

**Empathy** is a person’s ability to understand from another person’s perspective what they are experiencing. It is like ‘to walk in someone else’s shoes’. The facilitator should show empathy to the individual or group supposed to facilitate in such manner, so that they will feel comfortable discussing their challenges with him. If they feel that the facilitators understand why the problem is important to them will trust him to help them find a solution.

**Self-awareness** is being aware of one’s own thoughts, emotions, motivations, strengths and weaknesses. It is important for a facilitator to be self-aware to evaluate the situation in a meeting or contact session and adjust behaviour to suit the situation. It will also help the facilitator to know which areas it is necessary to improve on to make him a better facilitator.

**Self-regulation** is the ability to be aware of, and control facilitator’s own thoughts, emotions and behaviour so that he can change them to adjust to a specific situation. If the facilitators have good emotional intelligence, he will be able to read a situation in the best way to reduce the level of uncertainty in a situation. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to lead when someone is uncertain about something to keep development moving forward.

If the facilitator has good emotional intelligence, he will be able to read a situation in the best way to reduce the level of uncertainty in a situation. It will allow the facilitator to lead when someone is uncertain about something to keep development moving forward. It will also allow the facilitator to identify which people will need his help to encourage them to make decisions for their benefit.

### iii) Social, Behavioral and Attitudinal Attributes

Social, behavioral and attitudinal attributes are called social intelligence. In the context of AIS, social intelligence is the ability as a facilitator to form positive professional relationships with others in such a way that they will want to work with him. In the field, people often believe that formal education is better than experiential knowledge. Farmers may feel that they are not allowed to challenge the ideas or opinions of an extension professional because of this. It is his obligation as the extension professional, to facilitate development by making the farmer feel included in the decision-making process. It is important to let the farmers know that their non-formal knowledge and experience is valuable. It is the responsibility of facilitator to emphasize that the best possible solution can be found to any problem by working together.

## Role Play Exercise

### Introduction

The idea of the game is that someone will facilitate the meeting in front of the group. This person will receive feedback, and then get a second chance. After we discover together what worked and did not work, the trainer will complement with some theory. The idea is to see how far we can get with our common sense.

**Equipment required:** Flipchart paper and pens

### Steps:

1. Divide participants/trainees into groups of four.
2. Identify a facilitator from each group who will try to run the session.
3. Explain to the facilitator (away from the participants) the objective of the session (based on the scenario): find a solution or proposal to solve the identified key challenges/issues from the scenario.

### Functions of the facilitator

- a. Gathering the participants and ask them to share what they think are the key issues/challenges.
- b. Discussing how to solve the major challenge identified.
- c. Emphasizing that the goal is an active contribution from everyone in the first few minutes.
- d. Think of an approach to get all participants to talk.
- e. Assign the remaining three trainees to play as Rabikant, Braja and Maharnab. Give each one the printed role they have to play (see Box-2.4).

Let the facilitator gather his/her group members and give him/her 10 minutes to discuss with the group. During the session, use the cards below as needed. After 10 minutes stop the facilitators and gather all groups into the plenary.

Discuss with the participants: Was the goal of getting active participation from everyone in the first few minutes achieved? Did everybody participate? What worked well and what didn't? Ask how the facilitator could improve the responses. In the plenary, go through the facilitation tips. Let one or two people try to facilitate the same thing again with feedback from participants afterwards

**Debriefing:** What was different? What was the effect? Was the goal achieved?

**Wrap-up** -Discuss what went well/why, did not go well/why (e.g., not easy to facilitate discussions with different stakeholders).

What are the interpersonal skills required for effective facilitation?

### Box 2.4: Roles of facilitator in a group

The matter below can be printed and distributed to each participant to give them their roles for the exercise.

**You are the facilitator.** Gather the participants and try to identify the issues/challenges in the Koraput scenario. Discuss how to solve the major challenge identified.

**Objective:** Attain active contribution from everyone in the first few minutes. Think of an approach to get all participants to talk.

**GROUP 1:** You are Rabikant, the Silent Participant. You don't talk during the discussion. You just listen.

**GROUP 2.** You are Braja, the Talker Participant. Initially you are silent, then you suddenly talk continuously causing confusion in the discussion.

**GROUP 3.** You are Maharanab, the Confirming Participant. You don't say much, just repeats what the talker participant says. Confirming what he says.

*Source: CDAIS (2017)*





### Exercise 1:

#### Scenario Building exercise

Build scenario; imagine you are meeting with a group of small-scale farmers who produce a crop, say rice. It is a routine visit to this area. You have information of a new stress tolerant seed variety (STRV), (for example Bina dhan 11) that you would like to share with the farmers. You want to gather information on what has been happening since your last visit to see if the new seed variety could benefit them. You have already learned that it is important to know which questions to ask so you get the best information – to make a change.

Some examples of leading questions you could ask the group in the scenario above are:

- What do you hope to gain from this meeting?
- Are there any challenges you would like to share with the group?
- Are there any suggestions or changes you would like to share with the group?

Some examples of probing questions you might ask the groups in the scenario above are:

- Are there any specific techniques you use that give you good yields?
- How has your crop production changed since changing seed varieties in the past?
- Is there anything you have changed recently in how you produce your crop?
- Has anything specific changed in the community since the last visit?

After explaining to the group how the new seed variety could be better than the current variety they are using, you can ask possibility questions. Examples of such questions are:

- Imagine you change seed varieties. How do you think you will benefit from this change?
- How do you imagine you can benefit from increased crop yields compared to what you are able to produce now?

Examples of probing questions are:

- What action do you need to take to start making a change?
- What opportunity will you find in this challenge if you could look back on this from the future?

## Exercise 2:

### Post-/pre-session reflection exercise

- 1) What are the basic attributes of a good facilitator?

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- 2) What includes Cognitive attributes of a facilitator?

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**SESSION-3:****TECHNICAL SKILLS OF A FACILITATOR FOR DEVELOPMENT****Overview of the Session**

Facilitation is a dynamic process. It is the art of leading people through processes towards agreed upon objectives in a manner that encourages participation, ownership and creativity of all those involved. And the activities require high professional skills and techniques to bring about change for development. The extension agents should have clear idea about the skills to equip them for the task. The session is to discuss about core competencies required for facilitation, techniques of facilitation along with exercises for skill development and demonstration.

**Session Objectives**

- i) The core objectives of the session are to:
- ii) Improve the knowledge level of the participants on Basics of facilitation skills, Facilitation techniques and tools
- iii) Improve competencies required for effective and efficient facilitation;
- iv) Improve skills of the participants on facilitation- individual, group inter-group facilitation; and
- v) Improve capacity building of the participants in efficient facilitation.

**Session Outcomes**

After completing this session, the participants will be able to:

- Explain the basics of facilitation skills of a facilitator, techniques and tools for development of skills.
- Describe art of questioning, reflection and learning.
- Gain knowledge on process observation and documentation.

**Introduction**

Facilitation away from delivering lecture is the most essential skills every team or group needs now a days. It helps in establishing shared view by making ideas or decisions visible and clarifying details during conversations. Facilitation is generally thought of as those needed to run workshops and/or away-days.

In fact, facilitation skills range much more widely and are generally supporting processes, which may include team building, project management and change management. Now a day's facilitation has evolved into a distinct discipline which is used at every level in organizations, to help people in meeting to reach a decision, resolve an issue or generate creative ideas. Finally, it can be said that facilitation is the art of focusing group energy on a specific goal. Facilitators assist to ensure that every voice even corner seated silent or shy participant is heard and understood in discussion meetings. In fact, facilitation skills range much more widely and are generally supporting processes, which include team building, motivation, learning, and project as well as change management. It is an art, not of putting ideas into people's heads, but of drawing ideas out.

**Box 3.1: Facilitator** - who guides a process, ensures effective flow of information within a group so that participants can share information and arrive at a decision. S(he) is a moderator of a participatory learning process and assist in the sharing of information in a participatory way.



Now a day's facilitation has evolved into a distinct discipline which is used at every level in organizations, to help people in meeting to reach a decision, resolve an issue or generate creative ideas. Finally, it can be said that facilitation is the art of focusing group energy on a specific goal. From the above discussion, it is evident that facilitation is a practice that requires skills. In this session the functional skills of designing processes, applying a variety of facilitation techniques and tools, asking right questions, undertaking process of observations and completing documentation and using visualization to improve situations will be discussed.

### Who is a Facilitator?

An individual who enables groups and organizations to work more effectively to collaborate and achieve synergy, he or she is a 'content neutral' party who by not taking sides or expressing or advocating a point of view during the meeting, can advocate for fair, open, and inclusive procedures to accomplish the group's work (Doyle, as cited in Kaner et al. 2007). A facilitator is a person or organization that helps another one to bring about an outcome (learning, productivity, or communication) or to do or achieve a particular thing by providing indirect or unobtrusive assistance, guidance, or supervision.

Facilitator helps a group of people to work together better, understand their common objectives and plan how to achieve those objectives, during meeting or discussions through one or several processes. This process could be a meeting, a brainstorming session, training and development, a planning session, team building, conflict resolution, or any situation involving a group of people where there are desired outcomes, goals or targets.

### Importance of a Facilitator

There are several reasons why the presence of a facilitator is important for a meeting/ group discussion.

- i) The larger a meeting is, the more effort it takes to control and manage. Discussion between two persons about a technical question does not need much planning. But when a big workshop of two or more days with 10 or more people, it requires infinitely more attention to manage both the preparation and the process and requires facilitator.
- ii) Having a neutral, external facilitator allows everyone else in the room to get fully involved in the conversation. A facilitator facilitates a process and focus on how the groups members are working together, helping them achieve their goals effectively without introducing bias.
- iii) The higher the stake of a meeting, the more important it is to have someone who is a professional at running meetings. Having to repeat a multi-stakeholder meeting because of an unproductive first attempt is both expensive and a big loss of credit to the sponsor of the meeting. A facilitator helps to ensure the success of a meeting.

### What Does a Facilitator Do?

A facilitator is a person who essentially sets all the right coordinates for a meeting or workshop to take place and produce results. The process may vary depending on the situation, but most often, a facilitator has the following responsibilities when engaging in workshop or meeting facilitation:

- i) **Designing and planning:** The keystone of facilitation understands what the objectives of the session are and he can work towards achieving them. Once the objectives are known, then it is to design the accurate group process and select the proper facilitation techniques to achieve the desired outcomes. Having sound agenda helps the facilitator to stay confident and make adjustments as needed during the event.

- ii) **Running the process and facilitating the meeting:** When the session starts, it is time to guide the group through the designed process, encourage participation and help the group achieve its goals. Here are some of the most important elements of what a facilitator specifically does during a session:
- **Set the context and ground rules:** This is about making sure that everyone is on the same page concerning goals and the agenda of the session and ensuring everyone is aware of, and agrees upon, the rules of the meeting.
  - **Encourage participation:** Create an environment where all participant feels encouraged to share their opinions. This may involve breaking the ice, helping people warm up to the meeting and acknowledging contributions of participants to the conversations. This is one of the most important group facilitation skills a facilitator can have. When all participants are ensured, everything else can begin to fall into place.
  - **Facilitate discussions:** After kick-off the meeting, the facilitator will stay neutral, round up conversations, highlighting points of consensus and summarize key takeaways. Staying neutral, the facilitator round up conversations, highlight points of consensus, summarizes key takeaways and intervenes when necessary and help the group clarify outcomes.
    - **Hold the time and space:** While guiding the group through the different steps of the process, maintain a focused and participative atmosphere. Taking care of timing and keeping the environment supportive to ensure productive discussions.
    - **Keeping an eye on the efficiency of the group work and adjusting the process if necessary:** The main focus as a facilitator is to keep up a good momentum of the group's work and ensure that all participants contribute to finding solutions during the session. If it is noticed that cooperation weakens or the process is stuck, it is the responsibility of the facilitator to find the right techniques to adjust the plan and help get the group back on track. Group facilitation isn't easy, but by being aware of the process and alert to what is going on in the room, a workshop facilitator can help it be successful for everyone.
    - **Recording results:** Agreements made points of consensus, decisions and action items – these all need to be recorded and preferably kept visible for all participants during the event. Effective facilitation is all about creating an open dialogue for groups and teams. Recording and sharing the results of a meeting or workshop is a hallmark of a facilitator doing great work.

### Core Competencies of a Good Facilitator

There are six non-negotiable competencies of a good facilitator, although there are many more. Every facilitator has a unique style that corresponds to unique competency. The basic competencies are described below:

- i) **Communication skills:** A good facilitator is adept in communication with other people. He encourages open communication. He ensures inclusion whereby each member has the opportunity to participate and scans nonverbal cues through behavioral observation of the group. The facilitator ensures conclusion at the end of meetings and paraphrases for clarification. He also ensures that the discussion of the group is focused and not deviating from the topics.
- ii) **Active listening:** Comprehensive understanding of the message the speaker is conveying requires active listening. Statistics reveal that most of us listen to just 25-50% of what we hear and forget almost 46% what we have heard. To conceive totality of the message being conveyed effective listening is extremely important. There are some natural barriers to listening like, noises and other barriers result in talking more but listening less, boredom, being engrossed in personal issues, preconceived ideas and assumptions.



The facilitator should have skill in active listening. He should maintain a body language the group feel assured about his physical presence by facing them squarely, making eye contact, nodding, keeping an open posture and so on. He also should be able to attend to the speaker at a psychological level by understanding what is not being conveyed explicitly and he should be able to pick up from nonverbal cues. Paraphrasing and repeating back what was said and asking questions reflects that he is actively listening.

**iii) Rapport Building:** Facilitator should be able to connect with the group. Trust and empathy are essential for building a relationship with the group. Building a relationship with a new group requires finding some common goals and interests, shared value and outlook. A facilitator should be able to connect with the group. Trust and empathy are essential for building a relationship with the group. Building a relationship with a new group requires finding some common goals and interests, shared values and outlook.

**iv) Developing Synergy:** Teamwork is an essential in any workshop or session. A skilled facilitator knows how to bring the participants together based on shared interests and goals. The facilitators should facilitate synergy in the group by removing distractions, by making them sit face to face, in arena type arrangement for open discussions. He should encourage sharing of views, respecting each other's views, reaching consensus and through brainstorming sessions.

**v) Effective Techniques of Questioning:** The purpose of questioning is to seek clarification and to check for comprehension. Facilitators ask questions primarily to probe the understanding of the participants and to help them in critical thinking and for evaluating information. Socratic questioning method is a very effective questioning method whereby one just does not raise questions but finds out the answers himself. It helps in developing critical thinking skills. Facilitators often use this technique to unravel the basic issues, identify the problem areas, and develop accuracy, increase creativity and logical thinking.

## Basics of Facilitation Skills

There are many skills that excellent facilitators possess of which 10 top foundational characteristics of effective facilitators are stated below:

### i) Effective Communication Skills

Communication is the sheet that wraps two ideologies or two thoughts into one. It is of crucial importance to maintaining a good rapport among people to enable smooth communication. It ensures a free flow of thoughts, ideas, and strategies. But, enabling this unhindered communication in a specific group also requires tremendous skills.

#### Box 3.2: Characteristics of a Good Facilitator

- Humble and patient
- Generous and good communicator
- Understanding and accepting
- Inclusive and confident
- An encourager and a good listener
- An enabler and a motivator
- Affirming of everyone's knowledge
- Sensitive to the needs of others
- Willing to learn from mistakes
- Dynamic and good at summarizing others' ideas.

An excellent facilitator is one who knows not only how to speak comfortably in front of an audience but can also convey the meeting process in a simple, concise manner. Facilitators are expected to paraphrase back individual ideas for purposes of getting better clarity and/or to validate the speaker's intention. Being able to summarize and communicate back key themes, trends and/or decisions that the group has proposed helps the group to effectively create closure.

## ii) Open to Change

Being open to change doesn't mean incorporating every idea that someone else comes up with. Being open to change means being flexible and not dead-set on the process plan you designed. Different groups have unique facilitation needs which a great facilitator can recognize and cater to by tailoring the process and incorporating others' process ideas when they are relevant and add value to the meeting. For example, don't be afraid to step out of the meeting structure to enjoy a playful exercise that fosters team bonding or garners more energy within the group. When the group feels they are empowered to make suggestions on structural changes they are more likely to buy-in to the process.

## iii) Keen Observation Skills

Another skill a facilitator needs is to be able to pick up on small gestures, glances and facial expressions that can all point to the individual's honest reaction and/or opinion. It's important to get a sense of what is really happening in people's minds and what they are feeling by noting mixed messages when they occur as a way to bring concerns, differing opinions and resistance to the surface. Observation has three steps to undertake:

- **Process observation:** Process observation is observing how the process of development happens over time. It helps the facilitator to identify which areas in the development process need to be concentrated on to stimulate change.
- **Documentation:** Documentation is recording what has been observed. This can be in the form of minutes of a meeting or personal record of the facilitator what he observed. It allows the facilitator to track the progress of development in the group being facilitated. This record will let the facilitator identify where an adjustment is needed in the facilitation techniques and guide the development process successfully.
- **Visualization:** Visualization is forming an image of something in mind that are expected to achieve and how to achieve. In the AIS context, the facilitator can ask the individual or group to imagine how their situation will be improved if they follow a specific course of action. He may also ask to form a image of outcome of the proposed development process and then to imagine how they will get to that outcome. Participants to be encouraged to always focus on the positive outcomes they want to achieve. Visualisation keeps the participants motivated to focus on the actions they need to take for making changes towards development. It helps in deciding which of the suggested action plan will be the best one to make the change, and the imagination of how their situation will improve; they will be open to accepting the change that will move them towards the cherished goal.

### Box-3.3: Tips for facilitators

**Open-ended questions:** Questions that are answered with details, not only yes or no.

**Leading questions:** Questions that are asked to encourage people to think about a specific topic with an expectation to get information needed about that topic.

**Probing questions:** Questions that are asked for more specific information needs to give deeper understanding about the topic.

**Possibility questions:** Questions that are asked to imagine how things will be after a challenge is resolved.

## iv) Demonstrates Unwavering Positivity

Whether a facilitation is started in the middle of a facilitation or at the end of a facilitation, being optimistic and positive will help one to facilitate the meeting smoothly and get the most engagement from each member of the group. One way we do this is by using 'appreciative inquiry' – helping participants to look at issues from a strength, or "what's working" perspective rather than "what's not working".

**v) Authentic**

By being self-authentic the facilitator will find it easier to connect to the participants, which will help him guide and understand them better, resulting in a successful group facilitation in which the members of the group bond and trust each other. Just like a good facilitator has keen observations skills in noting mixed messages, the participants also have an amazing ability to pick up on disingenuous comments or statements which can shut them down.

**vi) Maintains Constant Neutrality**

Throughout the meeting, an excellent facilitator will be able to stay neutral and treat all participants as equals, regardless of power, personality types, personal opinions, or biases. This is a crucial element of facilitation that needs to be learned through practice. When having to play more than one role in a meeting (e.g. subject matter expert and facilitator), a skilled meeting facilitator will be completely transparent as which role they're playing when they need to shift between roles.

**vii) Energetic Personality**

A facilitator has to know when to ramp up the energy in the room and/or when to bring back the focus of the group. Having an energetic personality can help heighten the excitement for an upcoming project or get a brainstorming session off to the right start regardless of participant's commitment to the process. When tensions between participants appear, a good facilitator has the ability to stay calm during disagreements. This takes tremendous energy and skill and will help diffuse tensions and keep dialogue constructive and on-topic.

**viii) Promotes Constructive Feedback**

In order to ensure participants are not caving into one person's idea(s), the facilitator will challenge the group by posing questions to either help them think more broadly, deeper or wider. If required, the facilitator encourages the group to stop and reflect on their performance or ideas for purposes of improvement. Feedback is best when it is constructive and is based on real, observable events that others can relate to. The facilitator also demonstrates their willingness to receive feedback by actively listening and incorporating process changes where it makes sense.

**ix) Asks Versus Tells**

Facilitators use the art of questioning or asking, rather than telling, to encourage group members to come up with their own ideas. If the group is unable to come up with ideas the facilitator will only throw out suggestions to stimulate further ideas. The facilitator understands that if the group comes up with the ideas themselves, ultimately, buy-in and follow-through are increased. There are different ways of asking questions to get the information needed. Always **open-ended questions** should be asked. **Leading questions** may be asked to keep the individual or group stay focused on the topic they need to discuss towards finding a solution. Another way to get more information is to ask **probing questions** to empower them to start thinking of a solution to their problem in a positive way.

There are different ways of asking questions to get the information needed. Always open-ended questions should be asked. Leading questions may be asked to keep the individual or group stay focused on the topic they need to discuss towards finding a solution. Another way to get more information is to ask probing questions to empower them to start thinking of a solution to their problem in a positive way.

Some examples of leading questions:

- What do you hope to gain from this meeting?
- Are there any challenges you would like to share with the group?
- Are there any suggestions or changes you would like to share with the group?

Some examples of probing questions:

- Are there any specific techniques you use that give you good yields of crops?
- How has your crop production changed since changing seed or varieties in the past?
- Is there anything you have changed recently in how you produce your crop?
- Has anything specific changed in the community since the last visit?

Examples of possibility questions:

- What action do you need to take to start making a change?
- What opportunity will you find in this challenge if you could look back on now from the future?

#### **x) Patient**

Last but not least, staying patient during the facilitation process is crucial for the meeting to be successful. The facilitator does not show their frustration or anger at the participants for not being brilliant in generating ideas or when an individual or the group is not following the process plan. Instead, the facilitator evaluates if the problem is due to content or a process issue. Once noted, the resolution of the problem can be as simple as asking different questions to help the group see the issue more clearly, or as difficult as changing the process plan to suit the group's changing needs.

A great facilitator values and respects the power of the group. They believe better decisions; better ideas and better outcomes can be achieved when the intelligence in the room has been leveraged. By combining their knowledge, skills and personality in an effective way a top-notch meeting leader will be able to facilitate trust and draw the best out the group.

#### **Techniques to be used by a Facilitator to Optimize Facilitation Skills**

While facilitating a meeting or a discussion, the facilitator should have some skills which are given above. In addition to this, he/she should also be ready with this set of tools that will come handy when needed to handle the meeting successfully.

**Ice-breaking techniques:** It is well said that well begun is half done. It holds even in business meetings or discussions. There are times when the parties involved may not know each other very well. Here, the facilitator needs to use these ice-breaking techniques.

**Strategy techniques:** Every meeting has a specific strategy to be followed for its successful conduction. They determine the flow and the agenda of the meeting.

**Creativity techniques:** Many times, business meetings can get very mundane or monotonous. We all, being humans, need some spark in such situations. The facilitator can put his/her creativity to use and devise some fun which will add some colour as well as provide creative solutions to some problems.

**Problem-solving techniques:** There are problems and conflicts possible everywhere. They are an integral part of every walk of life, and professional meetings and discussions are no exception. The facilitator should be abreast with some problem-solving and conflict resolution techniques to deal with such situations.

**Decision-making techniques:** Every meeting is held to make some decision or finalize some strategy. The facilitator should have the methods to steer the discussion towards firm decisions in limited time with the least clashes.

While working with farmers, facilitation most often refers to a technique used to promote group learning, build consensus and promote collective action. This is especially important when extension is dealing with issues relating to natural resource management, linking farmers to markets, etc. However, similar facilitation techniques can also be used in meetings or other group settings which demands multi-agency collaboration, for instance, in up scaling climate smart agriculture.

The facilitator's major role in both situations is to guide the group to work together more efficiently by creating synergy, generating new ideas, and arriving at consensus and agreement. EAS professionals often lack many of these skills and this module is meant to address this critical gap (IRRI and CRISP. 2020). The facilitator's job is to support everyone to do their best thinking and practice and for this, the facilitator encourages full participation, promotes mutual understanding and cultivates shared responsibility. By supporting everyone to do their best thinking, a facilitator enables group members to search for inclusive solutions and build sustainable agreements. (Kaner et al., 2007).

## Concluding Remarks

From the above discussion it is clear that change is essential for development, but every change is not development. Facilitation skills are important to and trigger the level of participation and pattern of interaction of different actors within AIS enhances development processes. To become a successful facilitator for development one must master cognitive, emotional and social attributes to better engage with others.

### Exercise 1:

#### Post-/pre-session reflection exercise

1) What is facilitation?

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2) What are the three steps of observation?

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3) List three characteristics of a good facilitator

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## Exercise 2:

Look at the box below and put the design process steps in the correct order.

1. Choose the correct answer from the options (a–d) below;

A	Lead the group through discussing the agenda.
B	Introduce yourself and welcome everyone to the meeting.
C	Thank everyone for coming and being part of the meeting.
D	Plan the agenda.
E	Explain the agenda and the rules of the meeting.
F	Ask everyone if there is anything to add to the agenda

- ADEFCB
- DCABEF
- BDACFE
- DBEAFC

2. Define visualization and state why it is useful for facilitation in the AIS context.

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3. Complete the following sentences.

- Development is change but.....
- To become a facilitator for development you must master attributes to  
 .....
- The ..... of multiple actors within AIS .....  
 development processes.
- To be a facilitator you must be able to ..... and use different  
 ..... to help the development of..... or  
 .....



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## UNIT-2

## FACILITATING CHANGE IN GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

### Overview

This study unit is about facilitating change in individual, groups and organizations. Change is the pre-requisite for development. Change happens at different levels, in other words, individuals, groups, organizations and societies. Each facilitator should know how to motivate those with whom he/she is working with to realize their potentials, manage and adapt to group dynamics to achieve maximum out of every meeting or discussion. Finally, the responsibility of the change agents to support organizations in their change processes. Three sessions included in this unit will cover all the aspects.

The unit will inspire the participants to apply some tools to start influencing change at the individual, group and organizational levels. Ability of the participants to influence development will increase when they practice these tools and engage themselves in the process of change.

### Objectives

The core objectives of the study unit are to:

- Impart knowledge and expertise to the participants about group facilitation techniques and tools;
- Introduce with group dynamics and chemistry of working together toward achieving goals;
- Present art and techniques of problem solving and conflict management; and
- Techniques of supporting organizational change process.

### Outcomes

After completion of the unit the participants will be:

- Able to acquire expertise in group formation, graduation and management;
- Master in group dynamics and art of working together;
- Able to support organizational change process; and
- Master in problem solving and conflict management.





## SESSION-4:

## GROUP FACILITATION FOR AGRO-ADVISORY SERVICES

### Session Overview

The session is about (a) facilitating change at individual, groups and organizational levels, (b) Roles of facilitators in facilitating group formation, graduation and management, and (c) Highlighting the tools and techniques for team building and working and finally (d) How to gain expertise in problem solving.

### Session Objectives

The underlying objectives of the session are:

- i) Enriching participants' knowledge about group facilitation, its importance in change process towards development in EAS;
- ii) Familiarizing participants with the group dynamics, chemistry of working together achieving common goals;
- iii) Increasing participants' skills in problem solving and conflict management
- iv) Develop skills for team building issues of working in a team.

### Session outcomes

After completion of the session the participants will:

- Understand what is meant by group facilitation;
- Know vividly their roles in group facilitation, graduation and management;
- Know the techniques and tools for team building and working in a team; and
- Gain expertise in problem solving and conflict management.

## Introduction

Change is a process of shifting from one challenge to the next. Change transforms one to new levels of thinking, believing and understanding. Different people deal with change differently and change can be brought on by many different factors. Human nature is to be reluctant to change from his known environment to new ones. When change is upcoming people usually resist, embrace, run away, seek out and/or make change. Change can come from different types of messengers such as loss, separation, relocation, and change in relationship, change in direction, and change in health and / or personal growth. Usually change is undesirable, but desirable change is inevitable.

Facilitation, either individual or group is a process of helping people in learning, practicing and motivating to a particular activity. Facilitation needs specific attributes, skills and techniques of the person supposed to promote change for development. Like other South Asian countries, the agricultural extension in Bangladesh is at transitional stage of changing from traditional approaches to pluralistic, group-based and participatory approaches those have the potential to overcome barriers to participation, foster inclusiveness, and lead to demand-driven services. This has involved a shift in emphasis from individual contact to group contact and working with groups supposed to contribute to targeting, responsiveness to farmers' needs and decentralization. Realizing the changing demands, extension agents should equip themselves with requisite knowledge and expertise to facilitate the desired changes. That calls for the extension agents of comprehensive understanding of group dynamics, problem solving, and conflict management.

## What is Group Facilitation?

According to Roger Schwarz (2002), group facilitation is a process in which a person whose selection is acceptable to all members of the group, who is substantively neutral, and who has no substantive decision-making authority, diagnoses and intervenes to help a group improve how it identifies and solves problems and make decisions, to increase group's effectiveness and has substantive decision-making ability, diagnose and intervenes to help the group improve how it identifies and solves problem and makes decisions to increase the group's effectiveness. Group facilitation is an important management skill that can really help a team or group of people to achieve their goals in the most effective and constructive manner.

### Box 4.1: Agro-advisory Services

Agricultural advisory (extension) services are a vital element of the array of market and non-market entities and agents that provide critical flows of information that can improve farmers' and other rural peoples' welfare. After a period of neglect, agricultural advisory services have returned strongly to the international development agenda. Apart from their conventional function of providing knowledge for improved agricultural productivity, agricultural advisory services are expected to fulfill a variety of new functions, such as linking smallholder farmers to high-value and export markets, promoting environmentally sustainable production techniques, and coping with the effects of climate change and other health challenges that affect agriculture. Source: "Anderson, Jock R. 2008. *Agricultural Advisory Services*. Washington, DC: World Bank. © World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/9041> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO."

## Core Conditions for Facilitative Practice

### Box 4.2: Points to be remembered in group facilitation

Learning from the Myrada experience (Fernandez 2018) there are a few points to remember while working with groups:

- Ensuring the participation of people in development interventions;
- Training staff so as to enhance their capacity in building poor people's institutions;
- Recognizing that institutions can be double-edged swords – can resist change or promote change;
- Aligning people's institutions appropriately with the objectives that need to be achieved or resources to be managed – one model cannot manage all; and
- Respecting diversity in livelihood activities and factoring it into strategies.

According to Carl Rogers, Carl (1967) there are three 'core conditions' for facilitative practice- realness, acceptance and empathy.

**Realness in the facilitator of learning** – the basic and essential attitudes is realness or genuineness. When the facilitator is a real person, being what S/he is, entering into a relationship with the learner without presenting a front or a façade S/he is likely to be effective.

**Prizing, acceptance, trust-** it is a caring for the learner, but non-possessive caring. It is acceptance of this other individual as a separate person. It is the basic trust- a belief that this other person is somehow fundamentally trustworthy.

## Tips for Facilitating Groups

- Empathic understanding:** This element establishes a climate for self-initiated experiential learning. When the facilitator has the ability to understand the participants' reactions from the inside, has a sensitive awareness of the way the process, likely significant learning is increased.
- Mental and Physical Preparation as the Facilitator:** Mental and physical preparedness is essential to get the best out of any group facilitation. First of all it is necessary to familiarizing with some useful group facilitation techniques and taking facilitator toolkit with everything needed for the group.

- iii. **Creating right environment:** It will be better to have plenty of space, informal seating arrangement, natural day light and tables at the side of the room for small group working, where needed and ensuring sufficient time for the participants to achieve their goals.
- iv. **Ensuring expected outcomes/objectives clear:** Reviewing objectives with the group at the beginning of the meeting, if these have been established in advance of the meeting.
- v. **Establishing expectations:** Asking the participants to list their hopes and concerns of the meeting and as and when necessary helping them to set their own 'ground rules' whilst working together i.e. acceptable behaviours.
- vi. **Energizing the Group throughout the Meeting:** After running through initial introductions, using an ice breaker to get the group engaged, as well as an energiser when energy levels get low. Helping participants to focus their discussion with questions, statements, summaries and reflections of what has been heard or observed from the group.
- vii. **Managing Participation:** Participant's communication styles may vary, along with their quality of verbal contributions. Drawing out the quieter participants through small group work and asking 'sage' question or establishing their opinion. Allocating different roles to the high frequency or noisy contributors such as minute taker, time keeper, or writing on the flip-chart.
- viii. **Adjusting Facilitation Style:** The facilitation style needs to meet the needs of the group at different development stages. For example, a directive style of facilitation works well at beginning of a meeting. This is because participants typically prefer someone to initially take charge and take them in the right direction- particularly in new group meetings.
- ix. **Providing a Variety of Group Working Methods:** Varieties of group working methods like- brainstorming, meta-planning, decision making, action planning, capturing information on the flip chart or white board, small group activities and holding group review, etc. assists the group in achieving the best results.
- x. **Recognizing and reinforcing supportive behaviours and responses:** Recognition helps the group to build on each other's ideas and suggestions through facilitator's comments, questions and reflections of the group dynamics. Hence, it's important to challenge any repetitive negative statements or behaviours observed during the meeting. It can be done by using one or more of these simple techniques:
  - Moving the focus away from the person
  - Changing activities (to change their mental 'state')
  - Reflecting their statement back to them as a question e.g. "it always happens?"
  - Asking the group for their view on the situation and then moving the group on.
- xi. **Evaluating the Group Success:** Evaluating success either by using individual or group feedback, to reviewing and drawing out responsibility for the action points. To facilitate effectively, the facilitator needs to focus all of their energy and commitment to the group. In addition, they need to help the group in the most appropriate and relevant way. This could involve challenging some of the group thinking, or what is not being said through supportive questioning.

Above all, the most effective facilitator is one who quickly establishes and builds trust with the group, through their honesty and transparency in their communications.

## Tasks of Facilitator

The facilitator's main task is to help the group increase effectiveness by improving its process and structure (Schwarz, Roger M.2002). Roger Schwarz has made a number of important points in group facilitation as stated below:

- a) There is a sense in which facilitators have to stand apart from groups yet be acceptable to them. Ideally facilitators should not be members of the groups or their leaders as this can cause confusion around the role being played.
- b) For things to work group members have to allow facilitators to facilitate. At the same time facilitators need to earn the space to do this. Facilitators achieve this by doing their job well, and as Roger Schwarz points out by *being neutral* – not taking sides. Facilitating involves making suggestions and offer insights. Such intervention may well be seen by some in a group as favouring one side or another.
- c) Facilitators are *not the decision makers, nor mediators*. It is difficult to facilitate sessions where the facilitator is the 'decision-making authority'. Facilitators are not involved in the actual making of decisions (other than around their role and the process of the group); and in the purest form should avoid placing.
- d) **Facilitators are experts on, and advocates of, process:** While there may be times when facilitators *teach* – what we might describe as organized moments dedicated to encouraging particular learning (Smith and Smith 2008: 103) – most of our attention when facilitating is on encouraging reflection around experiences and process, the task or to other aspects of the group.

## Group Facilitation in Agro-advisory Services

Agricultural extension is the application of scientific research and new knowledge to agricultural practices through educating farmers. The field of agricultural extension now embraces a wider range of communication and learning activities organized for rural people by different agencies from different disciplines, including agricultural production and marketing. Initiated from Ireland in 1845, modern extension navigated a long way from colonial agriculture through diverse to-down extension and unified top-down extension- the training and visit system (T&V) for promoting the adoption of 'Green Revolution' technologies to diverse bottom-up approach.

### Box 4.3: Four paradigms of agricultural extension

**Technology transfer (persuasive + paternalistic):** This paradigm was prevalent in 70s to 80s when T&V system was established across Asia. It involves technology transfer through top-down approach that delivers specific recommendations delivers to farmers about the practices. The approach was ineffective, because the farmers were reluctant to adopt new techniques as in most cases they do not fully acquire the techniques as being complex, require improved quality inputs mostly costly and ultimate financial consequences of the practice.

**Advisory work (persuasive + participatory):** This paradigm can be seen as the service providing agencies response to farmer's inquiries in respect of technical perceptions and it is a participatory approach to promote predetermined packages of technologies.

**Human resource development (educational + paternalistic):** This paradigm dominated the earliest days of extension in Europe and North America, when universities gave training to rural people who were too poor to attend full-time courses. It continues today in the outreach activities of colleges around the world.

**Facilitation for empowerment (educational+ participatory):** This paradigm involves methods such as experiential learning and farmer-to-farmer exchanges. Knowledge is gained through interactive processes and the participants are encouraged to make their own decisions. The best-known examples in Asia are projects that use Farmer Field Schools (FFS).



In Asia and Africa agricultural extension systems are in most cases prescribed by donor agencies and create these public agricultural extension or advisory systems. The systems in general are based on four major patterns- i) public led T&V system; ii) public & private advisory services, iii) non-formal education (NFE) involving Farmer's Field School (FFS) iv) Facilitation Extension where front-line extension agents primarily work as "Knowledge brokers" in facilitating the teaching -learning process among all types of farmers.

Agro-advisory service is the latest form of bottom-up extension approach designed to provide need-based extension services. Instead of persuasion for adopting modern technologies, this approach emphasizes on facilitation of learning through qualified facilitators or moderators. Any particular extension system can be described in terms of both how communication takes place and why it takes place. It is not the case that paternalistic systems are always persuasive nor is it the case that participatory approaches are necessarily educational system. Instead there are four possible combinations, each of which represents a different extension paradigm, as described in the Box-4.3.

### Importance of Group Facilitation

Farmers' participation is considered as one of the essential conditions for sustainable development process. When farmers work together in groups, important new skills are developed within the helmets, like technical skills, skills in group management, problem solving, which all help the rural farming community to develop more quickly. Therefore, the development of an extension approach that aims at increasing people's involvement in the decision-making structure is needed.

The advantages of group extension systems are as follows:

- Providing services to groups is more effective than to individuals, as more people can be served at the same time.
- Information spreads more quickly in a group than among individuals;
- Experiences gained by a group will be preserved better than individuals;
- Groups can take over certain extension activities from the extension centers, like setting up demonstration plots, do simple tests, and spread information to farmers outside the groups (orally, by document, or by example);
- By working with permanent groups, extension agents (EAs) can get more insight in farmers' conditions, problems, and needs, and in this way EAs can better prepare their extension activities;
- By working with permanent groups, extension personnel can easily follow up the results of their extension efforts, as level of adoption of new ideas can easily be measured within groups.

**Table 4.1: Advantages, limitation and tips**

Sl. No.	Advantage	Limitation	Tips
01.	Contact with more farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One or a few farmers can dominate the group;</li> <li>- Lack of direct contact with individual farmers;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage all members to participate;</li> <li>- Deal diplomatically with dominant farmers;</li> <li>- Encourage groups where members have a shared interest and a similar background</li> </ul>
02.	Improves the learning and spread of knowledge among farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Harder to address individual problems.</li> </ul>	Continuation of visiting individual farmers
03.	Enables farmers to actively participate in programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is a bit difficult to arrange meetings</li> </ul>	Group members may be persuaded to convene meetings using chairperson or conveners as a contact point.

Sl. No.	Advantage	Limitation	Tips
04.	Improves the flow of information about farmers' problems.	~ Farmers may be less honest in a group	~ Adoption of open and friendly attitude; ~ Facilitate listening and asking questions and avoiding long speeches.
05.	Provides a forum for farmers to take joint decisions/actions.	~ Can be difficult to reach some target groups.	~ Seek advice from other organizations which have affiliated groups.
06.	Better access to resources.	~ Only one farmer in most cases rich farmers control the resources.	~ Ensuring farmers share on materials in the group.

### Role of Facilitators in Group Formation

Historically, extension has mainly involved technology transfer from research station to farmers by using individual, group, and mass media methods. It is to mention here that rural farmers especially small farmers have little access to technologies and services provided by the public sector agencies due to several reasons. To facilitate need-based extension services for technology transfer, capacity building for technology adoption in production, postharvest handling, value addition and marketing at reasonable prices, there is no alternative to forming farmer's groups or cooperatives and capacity enhancement of the group members to run the groups in a sustainable way.

Recently, many non-government organizations are providing extension services through farmer's organizations formed by the organization itself. These are temporary farmer's groups for implementing development projects. DAE the only public sector organization for agricultural extension service is also undertook group approach for need based extension services and forming groups through project interventions. Further it is also working with existing groups of other organizations. Now a days in addition to mere technology transfer is to play a crucial role as facilitators for group formation, graduation and management for sustainability of the group. The groups may be commodity-based production groups, common interest groups, etc. But it is important to keep in mind for the extension agents that the existing groups, either NGO groups, or BRDB groups have definite purpose and objectives and are guided by the lead agency. Groups of one agency do not work well in accordance of the guidance of another organization.

### Principles of Group Formation

Fundamental principles of forming group are as follows:

- i) **The group should be small-** The ideal number of members depends on the types of group.
  - A group focusing on **production** should have 8- 15 members.
  - A **marketing** group may be larger having 15-30 members.

In a small group, everyone has the chance to speak and contribute. Small groups are less likely to be divided by arguments or dominated by a minority.

- ii) **The group should be homogeneous-** It is better to have members having more or less same socio-economic backgrounds and close social affinity, that reduce conflicts within the members and trust each other, work together, and accept joint responsibility for development.
- iii) **The group should have a common interest-** All the members in a group should have common interest or target to achieve. For example, production of a particular crop, or raising poultry or ducks, dairy or fish farming.

- iv) **The group should have clear objectives-** The group should agree on a limited set of achievable objectives – such as marketing rice or chickens, stopping erosion on a hillside, or managing an irrigation scheme. These objectives often include making money from a specific type of activity. Earning money means success and builds the group’s self-reliance.
- v) **The groups should be voluntary and democratic.** Members should decide who can join their group, who will lead them, what rules they will follow, and what activities they will undertake. Decisions should be taken by consensus or a majority vote.

## Steps in Group Building

There are several steps in group formation. These are as follows:

### i) Identification of the need for group establishment

Rural farmers face multiple problems in production, processing and input -output marketing and there are some problems cannot be solved in peace meal, rather demands collective efforts. As establishment of ‘working groups’ are deterred by several intra and inter-community forces, it requires intervention of development agents. The local extension workers, the development agents who are working in a commune can help in identification of group needs through discussing with group members and SWOT analysis.

### ii) Formulation of group objectives

Formulation of group objectives is an exercise of group members to define goals and achievable targets, through open discussions. The discussion results are presented before the group members so that they can select a limited number of clusters as per the priorities. These are then converted into overall and specific objectives.

### iii) Group organization

During the group meeting, group operating rules and regulations are drawn, which determine some common basic principles to observe during group activities. Members determine how often and where the groups meet; they eventually set a schedule for financial contribution, and specify some rules of good behavior. During the meeting, the group is also to be guided to elect a management board, whose main responsibility is to keep the group members mobilized, to ensure that the group achieves its objectives and progressively develops its capacity, scope, and range of actions.

#### Box 4.4: Tips for facilitators in group facilitation

Challenges in our current training methods are:

- Trainer tells/educate the whole session
  - Do not show/give a demo “how to execute” not spend time for understanding the participant’s challenges:
  - Do not ask Questions
  - Not giving participant time to practice

**In order to resolve the aforementioned challenges, facilitators may use TRAIN method newly introduced in Bangladesh in group facilitation**

TRAIN is the method of providing training or transferring knowledge to another person or group of persons in interactive method which comprises of theoretical/conceptual understanding, showing how to do that, taking questions from the audience to know how much they understood, provide them instructions on the parts how they should do that and how should they utilize the knowledge after receiving the training.

TRAIN composed of Tell, Replay, Ask, Instruct and Next steps.

1. **Tell** (5-10 minutes): Tell the objective of the session, what is it that you want to accomplish and why.
2. **Role play** (5-10 minutes): Give instructions to participants for taking notes while role play is going on, looking on the steps and body language at the time of role play
3. **Ask** (10 minutes): Ask participants what did they see, what is the purpose behind the steps, body language
4. **Instruct** (10 minutes): Summaries the steps that were missed and reason behind the steps and how it fits into the objectives of the session, explain the body language, eye contact, raising hands, etc.
4. **Next Steps (15-2 minutes):** Practice, give feedback and make an actionable plan to execute.

The board also represents the group in external functions. Besides a group leader, the management board may include vice-leaders/ or, a secretary and/or a cashier. Situations vary according to the group's size, geography, and range of activities.

#### **iv) Activity planning**

Depending on their areas of intervention, groups make detailed operation plans before each cropping season (rice, vegetables) or every six months (animal husbandry, orchard establishment). Planning is based on objectives already formulated. In the plan, responsibilities are assigned and a calendar of operation is set up. Activities planned are generally of two types. Activities related to transfer of technology include: (1) technical training, (2) visits outside to see new models or seek for new technical documents, new materials, etc., (3) experimentation or demonstrations followed by field workshop, and (4) exchange of experiences through meetings and field visits.

In addition, farmers also undertake social activities (i.e., activities that require more organizational skills than technical knowledge). Such activities play an increasing role that contributes to strengthen the group's cohesion. Coordinated organization among group members can help to implement vaccination campaigns, ensure input supply, marketing new productions, or provide credit. External facilitators play an important role in suggesting activities for the group and with time and experience, group members become more autonomous in this process.

### **The Development and Sustainability of the Group**

The other important factors that help develop the group, and make become more sustainable are as follows:

- The enthusiasm and management capacities of the leaders are the main factors for the success of a group. Members join the group and participate in group activities voluntarily, based on the group objectives and activities.
- The group should start from the bottom, at the initiative of the farmers themselves. This gives an advantage since members know each other before the start, and they already trust each other to a certain extent.
- The group develops diverse activities for members as soon as the management board is able to manage a group with a single interest. Some members are more attracted by one type of activity, others by another type, for example training and saving. Economic activities make the group strong which can be done through the establishment of a mutual savings fund to provide members with cheap credit, or in the form of an economic production or business activity that benefits all members. Examples of these are buying together inputs like fertilizers, animal feed, pesticides, and to operate together sowing, threshing, or drying machines.
- Group meetings have to be interesting for everybody, and this can only be done when there are several subjects dealt within the same meeting, such as technical information, fund management information, economic information about prices and markets information, about government policies, and also when acute members' problems are discussed and solutions are sought. Finally, the exchange of information between members is easier when they not only see each other once a month.

### **Facilitation Skills for Working with Groups**

The most important skills for facilitation is the "process" skill, used to guide and direct key parts of organizing work with groups of people such as in meetings, planning sessions, and training sessions are briefly below: to concentrate on how to move through the agenda and meet those goals effectively.



**Listening:** A facilitator needs to listen actively and hear what every learner or team member is saying.

**Questioning:** A facilitator should be skilled in asking questions that are open ended and stimulate discussion.

**Problem solving:** A facilitator should be skilled at applying group problem-solving techniques, including:

- i) defining the problem
- ii) determining the cause
- iii) considering a range of solutions
- iv) weighing the advantages and disadvantages of solutions
- v) selecting the best solution
- vi) implementing the solution
- vii) evaluating the results.

**Resolving conflict:** A facilitator should recognize that conflict among group members is natural and, as long as it's expressed politely, does not need to be suppressed. Conflict should be expected and dealt with constructively.

**Using a participative style:** A facilitator should encourage all learners or team members to engage themselves actively and contribute in meetings comfortably. This includes creating a safe and comfortable atmosphere in which group members are willing to share their feelings and opinions.

**Accepting others:** A facilitator should be open minded and not criticize ideas and suggestions offered by learners or group members.

**Empathizing:** A facilitator should be able to “walk a mile in another’s shoes” to understand the learners’ or team members’ feelings.

**Leading:** A facilitator must be able to keep the training or meeting focused toward achieving the outcome identified beforehand.

### Group Problems and Conflict Management.

Difference in opinion can not only arise between individuals but also among many individuals in a group. It is to be more careful while handling conflicts in a group as because if it is not resolved at right time may lead to major unrest and severe tensions. Conflict Management plays a very important role in reducing the chances of conflicts in a group and results in better bonding among the members and better output. For facilitation of conflict management, the facilitator should act as per the following principles:

#### i) Not to impose own ideas on individuals in a group

Any idea about conflict resolution must be shared with everyone on a proper forum and addressing all of them on a common platform. The communication has to be precise, relevant and should not confuse the others. It is wise to cross-check with the group whether they have received the correct information. Information must be shared through e-mail and cc must be marked to all the participants to ensure transparency among the group members. A single point of contact must be assigned to a group to sort out the queries.

#### ii) Meet every one with a warm smile

While taking decisions, no one should be biased and try to see his personal or his friends/or relatives’ interest first. Group member should not be underestimated and the facilitator should listen the story of other members and consider the views and opinion of other members.

When a person is right it should be appreciated and if a person is wrong without making fun with the concept, the facilitator should correct him and guide him properly.

### iii) Conflicts Management through counseling

Proper counseling can reduce the conflicts to a large extent. If any member is upset with the other, the facilitator should make both the members sit face to face to discuss their differences. He should never ever provoke any individual to fight, instead make him understand. It is not wise to find faults in group members; but be a little more flexible and adjusting.

## Concluding Remarks

Group facilitation is a bottom-up, pluralistic and participatory approach in agro-advisory service. For success in this very approach it is necessary comprehensive understanding of the techniques and self-attribute development; starting from group formation, group graduation, management, implementation of facilitation towards change process for development. It understands target people, their socio-economic condition, their intelligence, demand and capacity in a nutshell living with them feeling like them actions they prefer for change. It should be remembered in every action of facilitation- learning is a process, not a product and extension professionals must become facilitator not deliverer of technologies or new information only.

### Case 4.1: Farmers profiting from commercial rose cultivation in Cumilla

Farmers of Barura, Homna, Muradnagar, Titas and Sadar upazilas of Cumilla district are profiting from rose cultivation. They were individually, cultivating a special type of rose for last a few years, without success due to lack of technology of production and postharvest management. With the endeavor of DAE Cumilla farmers have been organized into groups and all the small groups have been federated at district head quarter. DAE with the help of Subject Matter Specialist, Cumilla and Regional Station BARI provided the farmers with production and postharvest technologies. Farmers have also been trained on cultivation and processing organized by DAE. A marketing group with the young and landless farmers has been formed in each upazila who collect roses from the farmer's groups and market at Dhaka and Chittagong. Farmer's representatives at Cumilla when interrogated expressed that they need financial assistance alongside the assistance being provided by the local Agricultural Extension Department. They added that the extension workers regularly visit their area and advise them in groups in cultivation, pest and diseases management and postharvest handling of roses.

Mr. Charu Mia of Barura said that local SAAO has introduced roses here in the upazila from Godkhali, Jessore through his own arrangement and motivated local farmers in producing roses. At first they failed to make any profit because of the small size of flowers, pest infestation and lack of marketing facilities, said Charu Mia. But a few years back we have been organized into cooperatives and collectively take different actions necessary for commercial cultivation of roses here in Cumilla. Dilip Kumar Adhikari, Deputy Director of the Department of Agricultural Extension in Cumilla, said varieties of crops are being cultivated there due to fertile soil and along with vegetables ornamental plants and flower cultivation will be further upscale here in the district in future.

Source: DAE, 2018, Cumilla



## SESSION-5:

## MANAGING GROUP DYNAMICS AND WORKING TOGETHER

### Session Overview

Facilitators for effective group facilitation should clear idea about group, its formation and group management. For which S/he should have comprehensive understanding about complex group dynamics. The session focuses on groups, group development, group dynamics, and strategies for improving group dynamics, group management and conflict management.

### Session Objectives

Objectives of the session are to:

- i) Introduce participants with the groups, its formation techniques, and group building Process;
- ii) Improve knowledge level of participants on group dynamics, strategies for improving group dynamics;
- iii) Development skills of participants in conflict management for better group performance.

### Session Outcome

After completion of the session the participants will:

- Understand comprehensively what is group and how to develop group or team;
- Describe the dynamics of human interaction
- Explain group dynamics and power relations;
- Manage relationships;
- Explain shared vision and collective action; and
- Use tools for team building.

### Introduction

In the third world countries like Bangladesh, agriculture sector is dominated by small and resource poor farmers, and collective efforts are crucial for their development. Individuals who are inspired to change their current status have to work together to create an environment that supports their development. But facilitation of combined activities requires comprehensive understanding of group dynamics conversing diverse opinion and interest into a single direction, motivating and mobilizing group or team members towards actions. The session has been designed to provide the participants a comprehensive understanding of group dynamics and interaction between individuals in a group and to expose the participants to the strategies for improving group dynamics.

This session will make the facilitator aware of the nature of human interactions and how to manage relationships, which are often characterized by power relations. The participants will be exposed to some tools that can enable them to facilitate collective action towards a shared development vision.

### Understanding of Group

The term group is an amorphous one and can refer to a wide variety of gatherings, i.e. a collection of at least two people who interact with some frequency and who share a sense that their identity is somehow aligned with the group. Sociologist Charles Horton suggested that groups can broadly be divided into two categories: **primary groups** and **secondary groups**. According to Cooley, primary groups play the most critical role in our lives. The primary group is usually fairly small and is made up of individuals who generally engage face-to-face in long-term emotional ways. This group serves emotional needs: **expressive functions** rather than pragmatic ones. The primary group is usually made up of significant others, those individuals who have the most impact on our socialization.

The best example of a primary group is the family. Secondary groups are often larger and impersonal. They may also be task-focused and time-limited. These groups serve an **instrumental function** rather than an expressive one, meaning that their role is more goal- or task-oriented than emotional. A classroom or office can be an example of a secondary group. Neither primary nor secondary groups are bound by strict definitions or set limits. In fact, people can move from one group to another.

Again the group may be formal with definite rules and regulations or informal formed temporarily for particular job. The attitudinal and behavioural characteristics of a group, how it is formed, its structure and the way it function is the group dynamics. What is meant by groups, its types and causes of group formation, interactions between group members are discussed in this section.



#### Box 5.1: Tips for Facilitator

**Group** is a collection of people who come together to accomplish a particular task or goal.

**Group dynamics** refers to the attitudinal and behavioral characteristics of a group. It concerns how groups are form, their structure and process, and how they function.

**Team:** Two or more people working together to achieve a shared goal.

**Team building:** The process of getting people to work together effectively to achieves a shared goal.

### Characteristics of Groups

A group cannot simply as the assemblies of more than one individual or meeting together, to be a group it must have some primary characteristics. A group is the collection of two or more than two people working together, interacting and interdependent having a common goal. One of the social characteristics of group is that we being too many different types of groups in our daily lives. Like family, friends, schools, offices, etc. But to be a functional group with common purpose and well defined objectives must have some basic characteristics, discussed in the following paragraphs.

**i) Collection of two or more people:** Groups are the collection of two or large groups of people. Groups are composed of two or more persons in social interaction. One plus one makes a group and groups form an organization.

**ii) Synergy:** Working in a group or team allow the members to accomplish such things which is impossible by individual endeavours. Systems Theory suggests that “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” This is the very idea of synergy (Sherblom, 2002). In an orchestra or band, each person is there to perform in order to help the larger unit make music in a way that cannot be accomplished without each member working together.

**iii) Common Goals:** Having interaction and synergy would be relatively pointless in groups without a common goal. People who comprise groups are brought together for a reason or a purpose. While most members of a group have individual goals, a group is largely defined by the common goals of the group.

**iv) Shared Norms:** People come together for a specific purpose, they develop shared norms to help them achieve their goals. Even with a goal in place, random interaction does not define a group. Group interaction is generally guided by norms a group has established for acceptable behavior. Norms are essentially expectations of the group members, established by the group and can be conscious and formal, or unconscious and informal.



**v) Cohesiveness:** In any group, there is interaction and interdependence among the group members either physically or virtually to accomplish the group goal. Co-workers may work side by side on related tasks in work unit. When members of a group feel they are part of the other members of the group and part of something larger, they feel a sense of cohesiveness or wholeness and find a purpose that is bigger than their individual desires and goals. It is the sense of connection and participation that characterizes the interaction in a group as different from the defined interaction among loosely connected individuals.

**vi) Collective Identity:** Each group has a collective identity, not the sum of individual members. It clearly differentiates a group from an aggregation of individuals. Groups are composed of people who recognize each other as a member of their group and can distinguish these individuals from non-members.

**vii) A stable structure:** Each group has a definite structure that gives a relationship and keeps group members together with the stable functioning as a unit. The structure clarifies the roles, authority, and responsibility of each group members which is most important in pursuing group goals.

### Types of Groups

All groups are not same or people are brought together for the same reasons. There are various types of groups formed for definite purpose and objectives to achieve. Basically groups are classified as formal and informal groups.

**A. Formal Groups:** Groups that are formed consciously by the management, with an aim of serving an organizational objective. These are further classified as:

- **Self-directed teams:** The group of employees which are so authorized to make decisions, on their own, as it is independent and self-governing in nature.
- **Quality Circles:** A number of employees classed together belonging to the same field, who meet every week for an hour, to talk about their problems, identify the causes and find out solutions, to take necessary steps in this regard.

The formal groups are sub-divided into a number of sub-groups. Apart from the two broad classifications of the groups, they are also divided into the primary groups, secondary groups, membership groups, reference groups and interest groups. Brilhart and Galanes (1998) categorize groups “on the basis of the reason they were formed and the human needs they serve”.

These are as follows:

- i) Primary Groups.** Primary groups are formed to help to realize human needs like inclusion and affection. They are not generally formed to accomplish a task, but rather, to meet fundamental needs as relational beings like acceptance, love, and affection. These groups are generally longer term than other groups and include family, roommates, and other relationships that meet as groups on a regular basis (Brilhart & Galanes, 1998).
- ii) Secondary Groups:** Unlike primary groups, people form secondary groups to accomplish work, perform a task, solve problems, and make decisions (Brilhart & Galanes, 1998; Sherblom, 2002; Cragan, Wright & Kasch, 2008). Larson and LaFasto (1989), state that secondary groups have “a specific performance objective or recognizable goal to be attained; and coordination of activity among the members of the team is required for attainment of the team goal or objective”.
- iii) Activity Groups:** Activity Groups are ones those are formed for the purpose of participating in activities. The clubs are organized for the sole purpose of doing activities.
- iv) Personal Growth Groups:** people form Personal Growth Groups to obtain support and feedback from others, as well as to grow as a person. Personal Growth Groups may be thought of as

therapy groups. There are many personal growth groups available for helping people to develop as people through group interaction with others, such as book clubs, weight watchers, and spiritual groups.

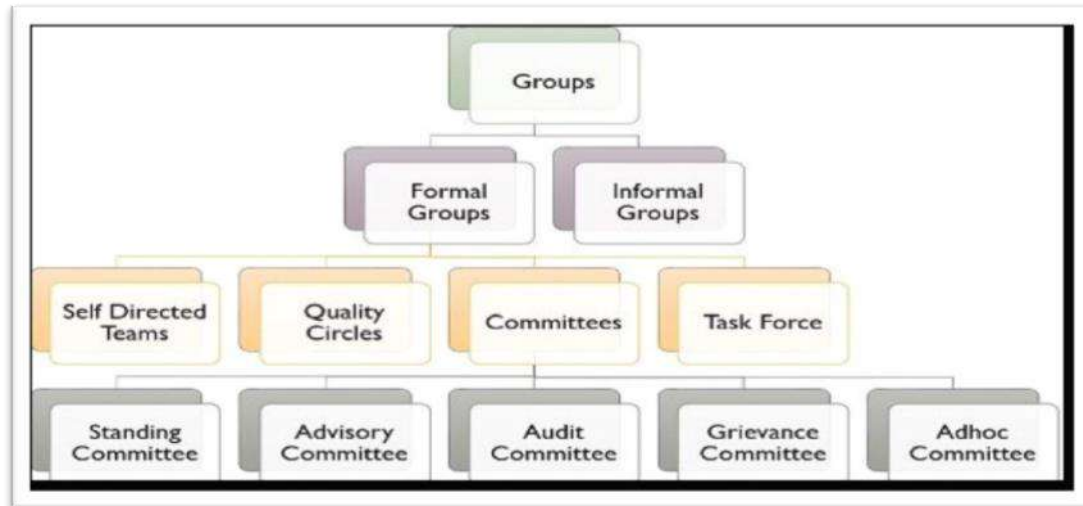


Fig.5.1: Types of group

Source: [https://businessjargons.com/group.html#google\\_vignette](https://businessjargons.com/group.html#google_vignette)

v) **Learning Groups:** Learning Groups focus mainly on obtaining new information and gaining knowledge in ways that can help those in the group learn new things.

vi) **Problem-Solving Groups.** These groups are created for the express purpose of solving a specific problem. The very nature of organizing people into this type of group is to get them to collectively figure out effective solutions to the problem they have before them. Committees are an excellent example of people who are brought together to solve problems.

**B. Informal Groups:** The social and psychological variables operating at the workplace, results in the formation of informal groups. The creation of these groups is spontaneous as soon as individual start interacting with each other.

i) **Committees:** An association of people created by the management for different matters to identify and discuss the issue of the group and arrives at a conclusion. It can be:

- Standing Committee
- Advisory Committee
- Audit Committee
- Grievance Committee
- Adhoc Committee

ii) **Task force:** It is a temporary committee, wherein people belonging to different fields are grouped together for the performance of the task.

## Reasons for Group Formation

In general, groups are created out of individual need satisfaction, which can be personal, social or economical in nature. Meaning that, the members need to associate with the group in order to fulfill their basic needs. Reasons for group formation are presented below:

- **Common interest, social needs, physical proximity and mutual attraction.**
- **Personal Characteristics:** Individuals with similar beliefs, attitudes and values are more likely to form groups

- **Opportunity for interaction:** If the employees of an organization, are given an opportunity to interact with one another, they find that they have many things similar, which also creates a group.
- **Interest and goals:** When individuals share common interest and goals, it requires cooperation and coordination for its achievement, which also results in the formation of groups.
- **Influence and power:** Last but not the least, a group has more influence and power, as compared to an individual, which also promotes its formation.

### Group/Team Development

Team/ groups are living organisms with certain predictable stages of development. One characterization of the progression of team development has been depicted by a series of steps on a graph. One axis represents success with tasks that are more and more complicated, and the other represents the amount of time and effort that the group has invested in becoming a team.

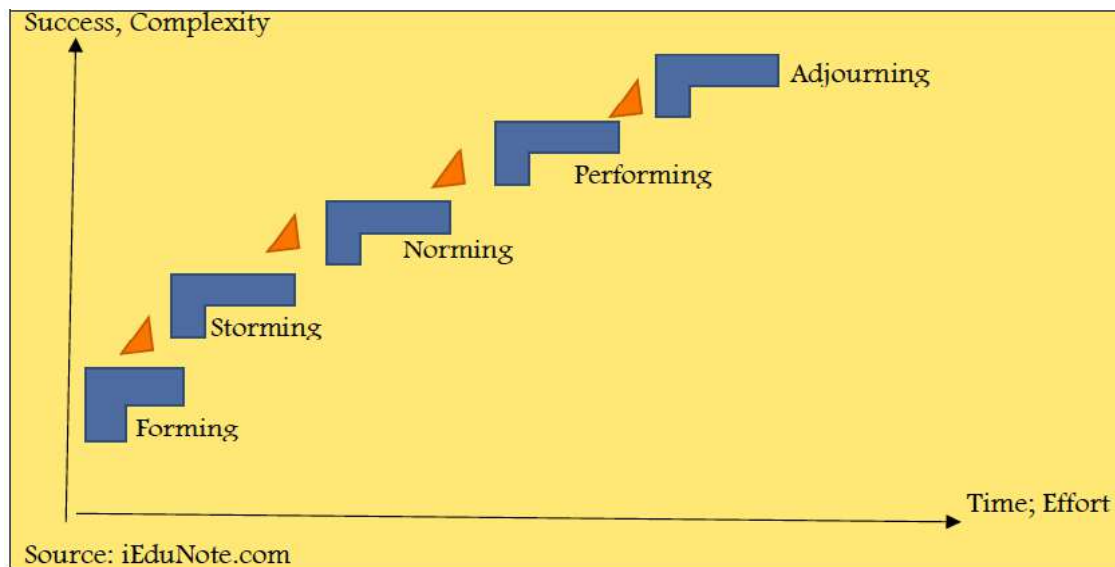
The stages of group formation are described in the following paragraphs.

- Forming:** Forming is the initial stage of development. Obviously, for a group to exist and its members work together, they must form the group. During the forming stage, group members begin to set the parameters of the group by establishing what characteristics identify the members of the group as a group. During this stage, the goals are made clear to members, initial questions and concerns are addressed and initial role assignments may develop and group norms (code of conduct) are negotiated.
- Storming:** Storming represents the arguing that will likely occur as the team defines itself. In the forming stage group members begin to feel more comfortable expressing how the group should operate. There may be conflict about the purpose, leadership, and working procedures. During this stage people often feel the team will never “come together.” This stage is similar to the human developmental stage of adolescence.
- Norming:** Norming is the stage where the team really starts to function and work together as a team. Individuals start to understand each other’s strengths, work habits and ethic and everything seems much more natural. Responsibility and roles are much more clearly defined, expectations are set, and collaboration is in full swing.
- Performing:** Performing indicates that the members now have a clear, shared sense of purpose, high trust, and open communication. The team is effective within the existing paradigm. Camaraderie, relationships, and team spirit are high.
- Adjourning and Transforming:** Adjourning refers to the team breaking up after the task has been completed. When transforming involves the team not breaking up but instead moving on to other tasks and objectives.

### Group Dynamics

The term “group dynamics” refers to the interactions between people who are talking together in a group setting. It is a social process by which people interact face-to-face in groups. Group dynamics can be seen in different dimensions- in business settings, in volunteer settings, in classroom settings, and in social settings. Anytime and anywhere when two or more individuals interacting or talking together, there are group dynamics. Each group has a certain behavioural patterns. There will be at least one person who tends to take the lead on conversation, offering his or her thoughts and opinions freely. There will be at least one person who remains quiet, sometimes not even appearing interested in the conversation. There may be other person who tends to interrupt other people, someone who wants the conversation to move along faster, or who wants to focus on a different subject. Another person may be concerned about people’s feelings and may try to make everyone feel equally welcome.

Figure 5.2 Group/Team development steps



These are only a few of the roles that people assume without even thinking about it when they are in a group setting. Group roles are largely determined by a combination of a person's personality and his or her experience with group settings. A person who is shy is more likely to sit back and who is impatient is more likely to push the discussion ahead. Again who is very confident will offer more opinions.

### Importance of Group Dynamism

- Firstly, a group can influence the way the members think. The members are always influenced by the interactions of other members in the group. A group with a good leader performs better as compared to a group with a weak leader.
- The group can give the effect of synergy, that is, if the group consists of positive thinkers then its output is more than double every time.
- Group dynamism can furthermore give job satisfaction to the members.
- The group can also infuse the team spirit among the members.
- Even the attitude, insights & ideas of members depend on group dynamism. For example, negative thinkers convert to positive thinkers with the help of the facilitator.
- Also, if the group works as a cohesive group, the cooperation and convergence can result in maximization of productivity
- Furthermore, group dynamism can reduce labor unrest. Lastly, it reduces labor turnover due to emotional attachment among the group members.

### Key Elements of Group Dynamics

**Group dynamics** relates to various unseen forces occurring within a social group or between social groups. These unseen forces are behaviors and psychological processes occurring in a particular group. Group dynamics influence how a group behaves and performs. Two types of group dynamics are found. One is intragroup dynamics (refers to within-group) and other is intergroup dynamics (refers to between two or more groups).

**Intragroup dynamics** refers to the underlying processes that give rise to a set of pattern, roles, communion, and collective objectives that typify a particular social group. These groups can be political-religious, workgroups, environmental groups, sports groups, etc. The dynamics of a particular group are affected by the fact that how the boundaries of the group are defined.



The groups can be further narrowed down to subgroups. For instance, the residents of London can be defined as one group. However, more specifically the subgroup can be people living in Central London or East London. **Intergroup dynamics** refers to the behavioral and psychological relationship between two or more groups. Inter group dynamics are related to the cognition, endowment, ideology, and behaviors towards not only for one's own group however towards another group. At times inter group dynamics are positive and beneficial especially when some research teams re working together for the achievement of a particular assignment. However, at times the intergroup dynamics can create conflicts between the groups (Griffin, 2011).

**Technological tools** for the interaction of the groups include email, bulletin board, information pool enabling hidden communication etc. The technological tools have their pros and cons while dealing with the group dynamics. The advantages include that technology provides a high degree of "interactivity" between groups who are separated both geographically and temporally. This helps them in understanding and creating synchronization among each other. Another advantage includes that technology helps a diverse population of people working in-groups the accessibility of the information that can be shared easily.

Another advantage is the speed of obtaining and transferring opinions and information. The sync in-groups are created with a lot of integration. Hence, the technology provides the facility to communicate very easily and quickly that mitigates a lot of confusions and misunderstandings, thus resolving the potential conflicts (Magia3e, 2007). However, the disadvantages of using the technological tool include the absence of physical presence. As per the psychologist, human beings are social animals that need interaction among each other.

The technology creates barriers against the physical presence and lack of emotional factor. Thus using the technology cannot create the association that could be created through the physical presence (Griffin, 2011). The technological tools also at times become reasons for the confusions and misunderstanding due to non-proper interpretation of the meaning of the sender. The receiver can interpret the meaning of the sender's message based on its own perceptions and opinions thus creating the conflicts. However, we can infer that besides the disadvantages the prudent use of technological tools can help mitigate the conflicts of group dynamics. However, the human element cannot be neglected that can only be best described in the physical presence (Griffin, 2011).

## Causes of Poor Group Dynamics

There are some of the most common problems that are responsible are:

- i) **Weak leadership:** when a team lacks a strong leader, a more dominant member of the group can often take charge. This can lead to a lack of direction, infighting, or a focus on the wrong priorities.
- ii) **Excessive deference to authority:** this can happen when people want to be seen to agree with a leader, and therefore hold back from expressing their own opinions.
- iii) **Blocking:** this happens when team members behave in a way that disrupts the flow of information in the group. People can adopt blocking roles such as:
  - **The aggressor:** this person often disagrees with others, or is inappropriately outspoken.
  - **The negator:** this group member is often critical of others' ideas.
  - **The withdrawer:** this person doesn't participate in the discussion.
  - **The recognition seeker:** this group member is boastful, or dominates the session.
  - **The joker:** this person introduces humor at inappropriate times.

- iv) **Groupthink:** this happens when people place a desire for consensus above their desire to reach the right decision. This prevents people from fully exploring alternative solutions.
- v) **Free riding:** here, some group members take it easy, and leave their colleagues to do all the work. Free riders may work hard on their own, but limit their contributions in group situations which are known as "social loafing."
- vi) **Evaluation apprehension:** team members' perceptions can also create a negative group dynamic. Evaluation apprehension happens when people feel that they are being judged excessively harshly by other group members, and they hold back their opinions as a result.

### Strategies for Improving Team Dynamics

Team dynamics are complex and multi-layered, as the result of interaction of many factors, like personalities, roles, structure, culture, etc. There are many types of intervention that can affect team dynamics, some of which are:

#### i) Knowing the Team

The leader needs to guide the development of a group. So as leader one should start by learning about the phases that a group goes through as it develops. When the leader understands these, he will be able to preempt problems that could arise, including issues with poor group dynamics.

#### ii) Tackling Problems Quickly

If it is observed that one member of the team has adopted a behavior that's affecting the group unhelpfully, it should quickly be challenged to provide feedback to show the team member the impact of the actions, and encourage the person to reflect on how he/she can change behavior.

#### vii) Defining Roles and Responsibilities

Teams that lack focus or direction can quickly develop poor dynamics, as people struggle to understand their role in the group. In this case it will be required to create a team charter defining the group's mission and objective, and everyone's responsibilities as soon as forming the team.

#### viii) Breaking Down Barriers

Conducting team building exercises to help everyone to know one another, particularly when new members join the group. These exercises ease new colleagues into the group gently, and also help to combat the "black sheep effect," which happens when group members turn against people they consider different.

#### ix) Focusing on Communication

Open communication is central to good team dynamics, so it is important to ensure that everyone is communicating clearly. Include all of the forms of communication that the group uses emails, meetings, and shared documents, for example – to avoid any ambiguity.

#### x) Paying Attention

It will be necessary to watch out for the warning signs of poor group dynamics. Attention should be paid to frequent unanimous decisions, as these can be a sign of groupthink, bullying, or free riding. If there are frequent unanimous decisions in the group, it will be better to explore new ways to encourage people to discuss their views, or to share them anonymously.

### Techniques for Managing Group Dynamics

There are many techniques that assist the facilitator in managing the agenda and group dynamics. The following are just a few of the more common and frequently used techniques available to the facilitator.

The facilitator should be creative and adaptive in managing group dynamics; as different situations require different techniques. Experience will help the facilitator to determine how the technique affects the group dynamics and when is the best time to use them.

- i) **Equalizing Participation:** ensuring fair distribution of attention through calling the attention the group to one speaker at a time. The facilitator recognizes each person in the order in which hands are raised. Often, inequities occur because the attention is dominated by an individual or class of individuals. This can occur because of socialized behavioral problems such as racism, sexism, or the like, or internal dynamics such as experience, seniority, fear, shyness, disrespect, ignorance of the process, etc. The facilitator should select who speaks next, continue to the last speaker to pass an object, a talking stick, to the next.
- ii) **Listing:** For smooth flowing of discussion those who intent to speak can silently signal the facilitator who would add the person's name to list of those wishing to speak, call on them in order.
- iii) **Staking:** many people want to speak at the same time, it is useful to ask all those who like to speak raise their hands. Let them count off, and allow them speak in that order.
- iv) **Pacing:** The pace or flow of the meeting is the responsibility of the facilitator. At a tense atmosphere it is better to choose which encourage balance and cooperation. If the meeting is going slow and people are becoming restless it will be wise to rearrange the agenda
- v) **Checking the Process:** If the flow of the meeting is breaking down or if one person or small group seems to be dominating, anyone can call into question the technique being used and suggest an alternative.
- vi) **Silence:** when the pace is too fast, or energies and tensions are high or people are speaking out of turn or interrupting one another, it will be appropriate to suggest a moment of silence to calm and refocus energy.
- vii) **Taking a Break:** In the heat of discussion, a little break will save a frustrating half hour or more of circular discussion and fruitless debate.
- viii) **Call for Consensus:** The facilitator can call for a test by asking if there are any unresolved concerns, which remain unaddressed.
- ix) **Summarizing:** The facilitator might choose to focus what has been said by summarizing. The summary might be made by the facilitator, the note taker, or anyone else appropriate. This preempts a common problem, in which the discussion becomes circular, and one after another the speakers repeat each other.
- x) **Reformulating the Proposal:** After a long discussion, it sometimes happens that the proposal becomes modified without any formal decision. The facilitator needs to recognize this and take time to reformulate the proposal with the new information, modifications, or deletions. Then the proposal is presented to the group so that everyone can be clear about what is being considered. Again, this might be done by the facilitator, the note taker, or anyone else.
- xi) **Stepping out of Role:** If the facilitator wants to become involved in the discussion or has strong feelings about a particular agenda item, the facilitator can step out of the role and participate in the discussion, allowing another member to facilitate during that time.
- xii) **Passing the Clipboard:** Sometimes information needs to be collected during the meeting. To save time, a clipboard may be circulated to collect this information. Once collected, it can be entered into the written record and/or presented to the group by the facilitator.
- xiii) **Polling (Straw Polls):** A **straw poll**, **straw vote**, or **straw ballot** is an ad hoc or unofficial vote. It is used to show the popular opinion on a certain matter, and can be used to help politicians know the majority opinion and help them decide what to say in order to gain votes.

The usefulness of polling within consensus is primarily clarification of the relative importance of several issues. It is an especially useful technique when the facilitator is confused or uncertain about the status of a proposal and wants some clarity to be able to suggest what might be the next process technique. Polls are not decisions; they are non-binding referenda. All too often, straw polls are used when the issues are completely clear.

- xiv) Censoring:** If someone speaks out of turn consistently, the facilitator warns the individual at least twice that if the interruptions do not stop, the facilitator will declare that person censored. This means the person will not be permitted to speak for the rest of this agenda item.
- xv) Caucusing:** A caucus might be useful to help a multifaceted conflict become clearer by unifying similar perspectives or defining specific points of departure without the focus of the whole group people with diverse viewpoints or even a random selection of people.

### Tools for Team Building & Working Collectively

Team building is the strengthening of relationships between members of a group, or team, to make sure each member of the team will cooperate with other members. Team building can be achieved through structured group activities that encourage individuals to interact with each other in a positive way. Collaboration is a key factor in building a small business because it works. The best way to transition from an individual to a collaborative mindset is to equip each team member for active participation in the group dynamic. Here are some simple ways to cultivate team cohesion:

#### i) Create a clear and compelling cause

It is important to create cohesion among team members through providing convincing reasons. When they are given a clear and gripping cause to be involved with, team members naturally become as passionate about the goals and objectives as their leaders. If team members do not care or are unclear about the goals and objectives presented to them, they will find all kinds of reasons not to work together. For collaboration to work, the vision and purpose must be clear.

#### ii) Communicate expectations

Collaboration must be communicated to team members as the minimum standard. To foster this, team members must be provided with defined individual and collective roles and responsibilities they will hold within the team. When they have a clear understanding of their position, each team member will work more effectively and without accidentally stepping on another person's toes creating unforeseen conflicts. In a collaborative environment, each team member experiences what it means to take part in the shared responsibility of results.

#### iii) Establish team goals

To push success in a team member it is essential to set measurable set measurable goals for each on a quarterly basis. The purpose of these goals is to provide team members with achievable wins. These wins have a magical way of breaking down barriers and creating positive momentum individually and collectively. At each quarter's end, the outcomes of quarterly goals must be made available to the whole team as a way to measure and celebrate progress, and to determine where improvements need to be made. Working with this type of transparency decreases confusion finger-pointing and the disintegration of team cohesion.

#### iv) Leverage team-member strengths

To empower each team member, it is a great strategy to work with their strengths rather than working around their weaknesses. It is a good idea to have each member take a personality test such as the **Myers-Briggs\***, and hold a team roundtable to share results.

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\* Note: Myers-Briggs Indicator is a personality test, typically based on psychological attributes and is used to determine differing strengths and types of personalities in a workplace or other settings. The questionnaire's battery of tests can provide insight into the subject's perception, decision making, leadership skills, and other attributes may contribute to personal or professional success.



This is a great bonding exercise because the results allow each person to get to know themselves and their team members in a much deeper way.

**v) Foster Cohesion between team members**

Cohesive teams are more successful. They are successful because each person on the team is included in as many large decisions as possible. When team members feel this type of inclusion, they feel the perceived significance of their role, causing them to naturally perform better.

**vi) Encourage innovation**

For teams to grow they must be encouraged to brainstorm and question the status quo in an open and non-judgmental environment. Team members must be coached and led to believe the challenges and obstacles they face can and will be overcome.

**vii) Keeping promises and honor requests**

Most requests and promises are held sacred within a team, but considered optional between other units. Taking a request from a client seriously and demonstrating that the team is working to do what they say they are going to do, goes a long way towards building trust and blurring boundaries. The question every client asks of another is, can I count on you? Will you be there when I need you? Do you care about this as much as we do? When team members feel they can depend upon the facilitator and the team to deliver what they expect, business grows, relationships grow as does revenue.

**viii) Encouraging people to socialize outside of work**

Everybody leads a busy personal life and then thinks of having one or more events obligated to attend add stress. However, socializing with co-workers outside the workplace is an effective way to open channels of communication, to create a better understanding and break down any walls of pre-judgmental or mistrust between team members. When team members learn they share common interests or wrestle with some of the same challenges outside of work as others, they experience their team members as more real, which helps to decrease individual bias, stereotyping and false objectifying.

**ix) Recognizing, Rewarding and Celebrating Collaborative Behavior**

Team members often sitting in conversation ruminating over *how it all came together* or If shared through video, newsletter, podcast, annual report or seminar, stories of great collaboration, break down the walls of individualism and honor the collective accomplishment. Attaching performance

\*rewards and bonuses to collaborative efforts sends the right message to team members about the values that are driving the business.

## Conflict Management

Conflict management is the implementation of processes and strategies that aim to decrease its negative impacts and the ultimate objective is to eliminate conflict. One may like or not conflict is bound to happen when people work together and harnessing potential upsides of conflict enhance team or group outcomes. Identifying the root cause is a vital step to properly manage conflict. For effective conflict management one should understand comprehensively the cause of conflicts and steps required for effective management.

**Cause of Conflicts:** There are many possible reasons why conflicts occur, including:

- i) **Personality difference:** different people from different backgrounds hold different views, interests, and values. When beliefs and opinion clash, conflict may ensue, with team members responding in ways detrimental to team morale.
- ii) **Ambiguous workplace roles:** Confusion occurs when roles are not clearly defined and employees aren't sure who to approach for certain decisions, escalations, or approval.
- iii) **Poor communication:** When information is poorly disseminated, vital details may fall through the cracks, which can severely impact product quality, work scope, timelines, and budgets.
- iv) **Underperformance:** Underperforming team members, such as those constantly late or absent or who consistently turn in mediocre work as evidenced by their individual performance measures, can drag an entire team down. Needless to say, this will make many people unhappy, particularly those always bringing their A-game to the table.
- v) **Stress and burnout:** Unfair distribution of duties, usually as a result of a lack of workforce planning and a systematic way to keep track of human resources or HR metrics, is one way to instigate conflict. It results in tired, unhappy, burned-out employees.
- vi) **Unrealistic expectations:** Conflict can arise when employers or managers expect too much from employees, such as when they require them to work long hours, making it difficult to perform childcare and other household duties.
- vii) **Scarce resources:** When employees must compete for resources in order to get their jobs done, conflict will inevitably follow.

### Steps to Manage Workplace Conflicts

Conflicts are normal in most work settings, resolving clues of those also lies there. It is evident that different people respond to conflict differently. In order to iron out disagreement in the workplace, there are a few things to consider in order to not aggravate an already difficult situation.

- i) **Finding the root cause:** Certain member, such as bully or someone who takes undue credit or misrepresents roles, may cause problems in the workplace. But very often by digging enough it is found that the conflict is not because of one specific person or group of people, but because of work style difference or certain organizational policies.
- ii) **Asking the right questions:** people naturally take defensive stance when in conflict with others. But in general, they mean well and simply view things differently. To uncover the reason for rift open ended questions beginning with what, how or why- even where or who depending on the situation can provide a holistic view of the situation.
- iii) **Questioning the right people:** To get to the bottom of things, it's important to ask the right questions to the right people. This means interviewing people on the ground, people who are close to the action.
- iv) **Keeping everyone aligned:** Conflict arises primarily when responsibilities are not clearly laid out. This could be addressed by making use of an organizational chart that documents or illustrates organization's reporting hierarchy.
- v) **Encouraging participation at all levels:** It is necessary to create an ideal workspace for all levels of employees.

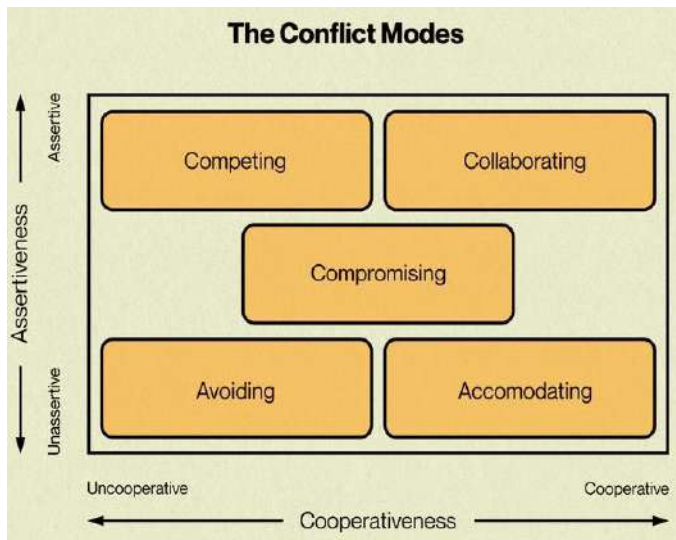
### Conflict Management Strategies

Different people approach conflict differently, means there is no one way to address workplace conflict. As such, the most appropriate conflict management techniques will, for the most part, depend on the situation and parties involved.

The Thomas-Kilmann conflict management model classifies five different conflict resolution styles or modes based on two dimensions: assertiveness, the degree to which a person attempts to satisfy their own concerns; and cooperativeness, the degree to which a person attempts to satisfy the other party's concerns.

### Strategy 1: Competing

Competing takes a highly assertive and completely uncooperative stance to resolving conflicts. It is often called 'win-lose' approach, it's power-oriented and only seeks to defend its own position, usually at the expense of others. It would be necessary to keep in mind about competing:



**Figure 5.3: Five conflict handling styles or modes**

assertive and cooperative.

During collaborating it is necessary to keep in mind:

- **It's best employed when looking to uncover new solutions:** Whether one looking for solutions to existing or anticipated problems, collaboration makes room for everybody's opinions, ideas, and suggestions to find the "win-win."
- **Reaching a consensus is not easy:** Often, it requires time, patience, a high degree of trust, and a lot of listening to come up with the best outcome. But the good news is it can be done.

### Strategy 3: Compromising

Compromising is punch in the middle because it's both assertive and cooperative, but only to certain degree. It is to be kept in mind during compromising:

- **The aim is to find a middle ground:** The parties on both sides of the conflict get something but also have to give something up to arrive at a solution acceptable to everyone, which is why it's also referred to as a "lose-lose" scenario.
- **Focus on what could be achieved instead of what would be lost:** It will better to highlight the benefits of the compromise, not what each party would have to sacrifice. This way, people are more likely to accept the result.
- **Compromising may trigger more conflicts:** Although less likely to cause problems than other conflict resolution styles, such as avoiding or competing, lingering dissatisfaction may cause future disagreements, especially among teams who will have to keep working together.

- **Using this option during emergency situations:** The approach works best when time is of utmost importance, e.g. during calamity situation when everyone has to be escorted out the premises.
- **Refraining from using power or rank to bully the other party to submission:** Outside emergency or life and death situations, this technique is likely to cause even more conflict down the line.

### Strategy 2: Collaborating

This is the holy grail of conflict management, as because it is both

### Case 5.1: Jurisdiction vs. Equity, in Gujarat, India: case on conflict resolution

This case study describes a situation in which two villages, Pingot and Jambuda, agreed to cooperate on developing a forest area that was allocated to one of them under JFM. However, the distribution of the benefits created a conflict. A third party, an NGO involved in promoting JFM in Pingot village, was involved in facilitating a settlement. Pingot village was involved in JFM on a large area of public wasteland from 1986. Jambuda, the neighbouring village, had a larger population, many of whom were landless families, and little public land on which they could undertake JFM. Thus, Jambuda sought employment in Pingot to afforest the public lands. In May of 1992, when some of the trees that they had planted were ready for harvesting, Jambuda villagers informed the Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF), requesting permission to harvest them and make the benefits available to the villagers. The Department granted permission to Pingot rather than Jambuda. This created a situation of conflict, because the Jambuda villagers believed that their agreement with Pingot gave them rights to benefits as well. Since the Forest Department officer was uncertain whether it was legally possible for the villagers from Jambuda to protect forests and benefit from their protection when the forest land was situated in another village, it was recommended that Jambuda discuss the matter directly with Pingot. The villagers of Pingot stated that there would be joint sharing of the benefits since the protection activities were also shared. This resulted in a conflict over who had protected the forest and for how long, putting into question how the benefits should be shared.

The third party, the NGO, assisted in coordinating the negotiations between the two villages. This proved to be difficult because of the destruction of neighbouring forest areas, the lack of trust, and the attempts, made by both villages, to increase their bargaining power. The NGO threatened to remove its support, which finally prompted the two villages to meet with the NGO and the Range Forest Officer (RFO) to negotiate a settlement.

During the negotiations, in July 1995, both parties presented their views, and when a settlement was not reached, the RFO decided on an appropriate distribution, presented it to the two parties, and the settlement was signed immediately. The question that arose from this case was what authority does the government have concerning an agreement made between two villages. Another factor that came out of this case study was the time involved for receiving information on the appropriate procedure from the government and to reach a settlement, and the impact the duration of the conflict has on the benefits (harvestable trees that were deteriorating with age). The author of this case study also highlights the issue of jurisdiction versus equity. As JFM becomes more popular, the question of how much forest area is required for a village to meet its needs begins to surface, especially when a conflict like the one documented in this case study occurs.

Source: Presentation by Shah, Anil. (1995), at Workshops on "Conflict Resolution in Forest Resource Management" held in Kathmandu, Nepal, 10-13 October 1996.

### Strategy 4: Avoiding

Avoiding is both unassertive and uncooperative. People who avoid conflict pretend that it doesn't exist and hope it go away with time. Points to be remembered during avoiding are:

**Some things just have to let go:** Avoiding conflict is appropriate when the issue is trivial and you have more pressing issues to attend to.

- **Confronting the issue will do more harm than good, albeit temporarily:** When a situation is emotionally charged, avoiding it may give everyone time to cool down and think more rationally.
- **Some conflicts don't resolve themselves:** Ignoring a conflict may result in a much bigger conflict. For example, employers ignoring employees' repeated requests to review their benefits packages may find themselves being indicted in a costly labor lawsuit.

### Strategy 5: Accommodating

Accommodating is the most cooperative but the least assertive. It is called harmonizing or peacekeeping, when it is given into the demands of the other party, without any regard of one's own concerns. Points to be kept in mind:

- **Give in if it means better options or solutions:** Acquiescing doesn't sound so bad if it results in better organizational outcomes.



- **Accommodate only when one can do so cheerfully:** Accommodating works best when winning is more important to the other person and losing is of little consequence to you.
- **Acquiesce to preserve personal relationships:** People who give rather than take are usually sensitive to the needs of others and find satisfaction in helping.
- **Don't be a victim:** People prone to giving in can easily be victimized by the combative, competing types. Also, when one gives in simply to avoid conflict, people may see it as weakness.

### Concluding Remarks

With more and more challenges in agriculture that need communities to come together for resolution, EAS have to initiate and strengthen collective action at the community and organizational level. Facilitation, especially managing conflicts among members of the community, enhancing group cohesion and trust among the members, and developing community leadership etc., are all critical competencies that EAS personnel should definitely have. Conflicts often stem from competition for land and natural resources, such as water, poverty, lack of employment, and opportunities for a better future, misunderstanding among members, and also when people feel that their opinions are not respected. Diagnosis of the sources/ of conflicts and using varied facilitation styles by EAS personnel are therefore critical in promoting agricultural development.



## Exercise 1

**Dealing with conflict Introduction:** this is an exercise in which the facilitator realizes that this sort of scenario occurs in their daily lives, and that it is hard to facilitate a discussion where participants have very strong, and sometimes conflicting positions. Finally, the audience will help the facilitator by providing some tips and gain confidence that it is possible to improve and bring people closer to each other!

- Ask the participants which of them has found themselves in a situation in which they facilitated or were part of a meeting/workshop and conflict arose. “What happened? What was your role (participant or facilitator)? What did you do in this situation”?
- Simulate situation.
  - a. The participant who comes with the case will be the facilitator and he will choose the participants for the chosen workshop/meeting. These participants should have strong positions.
  - b. If the participant was not the facilitator of the meeting where conflict arose, you can also ask a volunteer to facilitate it.
- Stop the simulation and discuss some tips. A tip could be to ask questions to go deeper.
  - a. What makes you want this?
  - b. What is important to you?
- Then resume simulation and try-out tips to see what helps to improve things.
- Acknowledge the improvement and make a bridge to the theory.

**Note:** This might not be a very easy one to facilitate. If you do not feel comfortable simulating, just try to bring out some experiences people have with meetings in which conflict arose, the role they played, and how difficult these situations can be. Check whether they actually agree. Reassure them then that there are some tips that will help them to bring people together. Source: CDAIS 2017.





## SESSION-6: SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE PROCESS

### Session Review

The session focuses on organizational change; change management; its importance; support needed for organizational change, change management tools and techniques, enhancing performance of organization importance

### Session Objectives

Session objectives are to improve knowledge of the participants about:

- Organizational change process
- Tools for organization change
- Organizational change management
- Enhancing performance of organization
- Leadership development.

### Session outcomes

After completion of this session each participant will be able to:

- Explain the organizational change process;
- Support organizations in continual learning to adapt to change;
- Enhance the performance of an organization;
- Describe leadership development; and
- Use tools for organizational change.

### Introduction

Change is an inevitable process for development. Starting from climate to the life style, activities pattern in our everyday life is under the process of change to meet the demand of lives and livelihoods. Organizational change is how an organization changes the plans they use to run the organisation. It also changes in how the organization is managed. Most organizations today are in a constant state of flux as they respond to the fast-moving external business environment, global and local economies, and technological advancement. This means that workplace processes, systems, and strategies must continuously change and evolve for an organisation to remain competitive.

As an extension professional, a facilitator is part of an organisation, but more importantly s/he will be supporting different forms of organizations to survive in a constantly changing environment. Change cannot be avoided. Adaptation is the key to organizational survival. This session introduces the participants to organizational change processes and how one can support organizations to continuously learn to adapt to the changing context. One will have a better understanding of what organizations need to do to enhance and sustain performance, including some aspects of leadership. For most successfully managed change in an organization, it is important to careful involvement of all employees supposed to implement the change process to create a trusting and trustworthy environment in advance of the change. Successful change management practitioners spoke about change working best in organizations that traditionally value each employee and respect their potential contribution. Change management and change is as easier in organizations that have a frequent and honest communication. With this knowledge one will be able to support organizations to navigate through changing contexts with a reasonable degree of success.

## Organizational Change Management

A change management plan can support a smooth transition and ensure your employees are guided through the change journey. The harsh fact is that approximately 70 percent of change initiatives fail due to negative employee attitudes and unproductive management behavior. Using the services of a professional change management consultant could ensure you are in the winning 30 percent. There are six key steps to effective organizational change management:

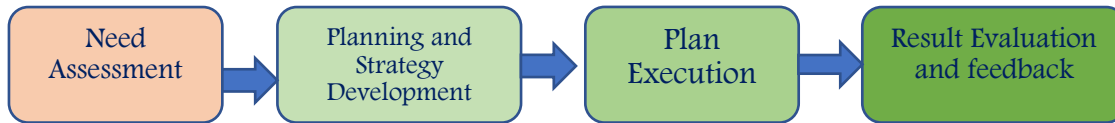
- i) **Clearly defining the change and aligning it to business goals:** The first step is to clearly defining the change and associating it organization's goals. It requires to articulate the change and conducting a critical review against organizational objectives and performance goals to ensure that the change will bring the business or organization in the right direction strategically, financially and ethically.
- ii) **Determining impacts and those affected:** Once it has been determined what is to be achieved and why, then it is to determine the impacts of change at various organizational levels. It is essential to review the effect on each business unit and how it pours through the organizational structure to the individual. This information will start to form the blueprint for where training and support is needed the most to mitigate the impacts.
- iii) **Developing a communication strategy:** Although all employees should be taken on the change journey, the first two steps will have highlighted those employees one must communicate the change to determine the most effective means of communication for the group or individual that will bring them on board. The communication strategy should include a timeline for how the change will be incrementally communicated, key messages, and the communication channels and media planned to use.
- iv) **Providing effective training:** With the change message out in the open, it's important that your people know they will receive training, structured or informal, to teach the skills and knowledge required to operate efficiently as the change is rolled out. Training could include a suite of micro-learning online modules, or a blended learning approach incorporating face-to-face training sessions or on-the-job coaching and mentoring.
- v) **Implementing a support structure:** It is essential to provide a support structure to assist employees to emotionally and practically adjust to the change and to build proficiency of behaviours and technical skills needed to achieve desired business results. Some change can result in redundancies or restructures, so it will require providing support such as counseling services to help people navigate the situation, adjusting to the changes to how a role is performed, a mentorship or an open-door policy with management to ask questions as they arise could be set up.
- vi) **Measuring the change process:** A structure need to be put in place throughout the change management to measure the business impact of the changes and ensure that continued reinforcement opportunities exist to build proficiencies. It should also to be evaluate the change management plan to determine its effectiveness and document any lessons learnt.

## Organizational Change Process

Organizational change is a process that is important for an organisation to survive. The extension professional does know about changes in markets or policy. It will be part of his job to support organizations in the change process that will help him adapt to changing situations. The process starts with looking at what the organisation is currently doing. This gives the extension agent an idea of what needs to change for development to happen. When it is identified where the change is needed, one can help plan a strategy on how to make the change. The role of facilitator is to guide the planning committee to make the plans realistic and practical.



When this strategy has been developed, the implementation of the plan is important. Implementation will include choosing a committee or group of people who will be responsible for carrying out the plan. After implementation it will be required to evaluate the results of the changes. Feedback should be collected to see whether the plan is working or if there are things that need to be changed to make it better.



**Figure 6.1: Organizational change process**

### Building Support for Needed Organizational Changes

Facilitating organizational change require a systematic activities or intervention to be successful. It is to be ensured that the employees are guided through the change journey as per plan developed in advance. Change initiatives fail due to negative employee attitudes and unproductive management behaviour. Supporting organizational change require the following steps:

- i) **Provide information to employees:** It is necessary to provide as much information as possible to as many employees as possible, about the business, share financial information, customer feedback, organization's development projections and challenges. The informed workforce will understand and agree with the need for change. They may not agree on the how and/or what, but it is better to have agreement on the "why" and the "whether".
- ii) **Creation of urgency around the need to change:** Projection, for the workforce, what will happen if the needed changes are not made is important. Communication of the information honestly and using available data whenever necessary, is necessary to justify the reasons for making the changes.
- iii) **Spending extra time and energy working with front line supervisory staff and line managers:** It is utmost important to ensure that the front line supervisory staff and line managers understand, can communicate about, and support the changes. Their action and communication are critical in molding the opinion of the rest of the workforce. There may have some employees who can create the most resistance first from their actions and beliefs, and then from the employees who report to them, but it is not needed that this group supports the plan for change.
- iv) **Aligning all organizational system to support needed changes:** These in include the performance management system, rewards and recognition, disciplinary approaches compensation, promotions, and out-sourcing. A consistency across all HR systems will support faster change.
- v) **Aligning the informal structures and networks of the organization with the desired changes:** Tapping the informal communication and political network, will accelerate change commitment. As an example, one can eat lunch in the lunchroom and discuss the changes informally with others. Spending extra time in communicating the positive facets of the change to people known to him and are "key communicator" in the organization.

#### Case - 6.1: What alternative need to be done

A few years ago, following a presentation at a regional conference of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), a client and an expert discussed what could be done differently in implementing team works in the company.

The client replied that his biggest mistake has been not firing the mid-level managers who resisted the change earlier. Allowing 18 month time to them had undermined the change for a quite well.

**vi) Helping employees to feel:** It is imperative to let the employees who are involved in a change management process feel that is larger than them. This can be done by involving employees in change management effectively.

Supporting change could include:

- Project management of change
- People psychology aspects of change
- Communications in change
- The importance of clarity in change
- HR issues attached to change- redeployment, attitudes, policy changes, individual development needs, development, skills change, behaviors/ attitudes, staffing levels required (up or down), relocation and mergers.

## Organizational Change Management Tools and Techniques

Change management is unique to every organization, and there is no one size fits for all approach. By using the following tools and techniques in developing an approach that closely accounts for the needs of an organization will ensure a successful transition.

### i) Flowcharting

Making a flowchart of all organizational process serves as a visual sketch especially for those in the organization who don't have a broader view of some of the key processes in the organization. Flowcharting is a simple way to get people on board with where a company is at and where it would like to be. Exercising drawing of the organizational flowchart by the managers will reveal how people perceive the key processes of the organization. Any conflicting views or misunderstanding needs to be dealt with before moving on to another change management tool. Once any change begins to be implemented, it can be added to the flowchart so that all members of the organization have the chance to keep up with the change – raising their feeling of contribution and commitment to the organizational goals.

### ii) Metrics and Data Collection

Many people feel shame at the idea of number crunching, but collecting the right information and data is a critical step in change management. Focusing on facts – how the organization has done in the past and where it stands today in respect to competition, risks, and opportunities, will steer change management in a constructive direction and shorten the decision-making time. It will also help avoid any unnecessary arguments that only lead to frustration and loss of momentum. Meaningful and correct data needs to be collected and displayed using a metric design that is easy to read. Metrics and data collection must include the cycle time, which is the average time from start to end, the range of cycle time which includes the shortest and the longest cycle time, and the percentage with the longest and the shortest time, and the total number of units that flows through the process in a certain period of time and percentage of errors and units that need to be redone.

### i) Force Field Analysis

This change management tool provides an initial view of change problems that need to be tackled. It highlights the driver for change and change inhibitors. Originally developed by a social psychologist, the idea behind Force Field Analysis is that for change to be successful, the driving forces need to be strengthened or the resisting forces weakened. The strongest inhibitor to change is resistance from members of the organization. For new change to be accepted by members of the organization, it is needed to focus on the benefits of the new change. Open discussions aiming at understanding and dealing with staff who are resistant to change will be helpful.

#### iv) Culture mapping

Another useful change management tool is culture mapping. As a matter of fact, every organization has its own ways of doing things i.e. it has its own way of establishing values, concepts, norms and practices. Some typical paradigms that most organizations have include: respect for authority where decisions made by senior management are unquestioned or the reward system is based on good performance or seniority. A man responsible for managing change in an organization, must be fully aware of the organizational culture so that management practices are appropriate. The norm, on which base management is usually done is the biggest hurdle to change. So, to start working on organizational change management, it will be necessary to change the existing paradigms and is possible only when change management tool is clearly understood.

#### v) Project plan

Although this may sound obvious, having a clear project plan is critical for staying on track. It will serve as a framework from which to work in, to know where some flexibility is allowed and which boundaries should not be crossed. Most of the time, a change management initiative will require many people working in various departments of the organization to implement new changes simultaneously. It is therefore very important to utilize this change management tool to come up with a clear plan on how the proposed change is going to be implemented. Having a project plan will clarify roles and help manage deadlines – keeping the company agile during some of the biggest challenges of the change process.

### Organizational Learning to Adapt to Changing Environment

Organizational learning is the way an organization generates stores and distributes information about what they have learned as they improve. It is a **continuous record** of the organizational change process. It is important to keep such a record because it will give the facilitator feedback on what has already been tried, what has worked and which plans need revision. Knowing this information can help move development of an organization forward in a positive way because it is easier to find the challenges and address them. Team learning is the foundation of organizational learning. Leaders support organizational learning by promoting a shared vision, fostering knowledge emergence, and ensuring knowledge diffusion. Supporting organizational learning makes organizational change possible and enables competitive advantage.

### Enhancing Performance of Organizations

It is important for a part of a system to work well on their own so that the whole system works well. Organizations make up a part of the AIS and it is important that they perform well. A facilitator can play a part in enhancing performance through motivation and mentorship or coaching.

#### i) Motivation

The word motivation is derived from the Latin word “movere”, which means to “transfer” or “push”. Robbins and Coulter (2014) describe motivation as a process by which a person’s efforts are energized, directed and sustained toward attaining a goal. Sansone and Harackiewicz (2000) define motivation as an internal mechanism that guides behavior. This can be referred to the catalyzer for individual employees to enhance their working performance to achieve organizational performance (Sekhar *et al.*, 2013). Steer (1994) also argues that the goal of motivation is to enable employees to improve productivity, increase efficiency and improve overall organizational performance. It is important for organizations to find the factors to motivate employees to perform to their maximum ability. Employees are assumed to value intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Both forms of rewards contribute significantly to the levels of employees’ motivation to work (Herzberg *et al.*, 1959).

Organizations utilize various motivation and reward system to motivate employees. Organizational motivation can be divided into financial or non-financial and intrinsic and extrinsic systems.

There are four factors of motivation that exist in every organization or business. These factors determine the levels of motivation of the staff, whether positive or negative. Fortunately, each of these ingredients can be changed in a positive way—usually when a manager or supervisor replaces a leader whose management style has not been conducive to bringing out the very best in each person.

### a) Motivation in Organizational behaviour

Motivation is one of the three key performance elements. In fact, research suggests that performance is a function of ability, motivation and opportunity:

**Performance = Function {Ability × Motivation × Opportunity}**

Ability refers to a person's or a team's ability to perform a task. Opportunity refers to the timing and situation around the task. For instance, if a hospital sets out to be known for successful heart transplants, it must have a team of surgeons that are skilled in performing transplants (ability), and there must be adequate space and equipment to perform transplants, as well as patients who need them (opportunity). Managers have little influence over ability, and they can only somewhat influence opportunity. Motivation isn't a stable state of mind, and what motivates an employee right now might not be the same a year later. But researchers don't necessarily agree on the best way to accomplish that—and perhaps there is not one best approach.

Motivation results when an individual interacts with a situation. It's a state of mind where the individual determines the level of desire, interest and energy that will translate into action.

**Motivation = Intensity + direction + persistence of effort**

**Intensity** refers to how hard a person tries to achieve his or her goal. For example- Danny clearly enjoys reading and does a lot of it—his intensity for reading is high, but his intensity around history is low. **Direction** refers to the area to which an individual focuses his efforts, and the quality of those focused efforts. Finally, there is **persistence**, or the amount of time an individual can maintain the effort to achieve a goal.

A person's motivation changes from situation to situation and over time. In addition to individual attitudes, motivation also considers a person's needs. **Needs** are based on personality, values and relate to things that a person desire. For example- a student stays in school and graduate, so his values and desires may shift and cause him to read his textbooks.

So, there seems to be two factors at play in motivation in an individual. One is a behavioral aspect and a factor that people are motivated to fill their needs—food, shelter, and more complex needs, too.

**b) Motivating People at Work:** Motivation is important to managers because it leads to action and is one of the three key elements of performance. More importantly, it's a variable that can be influenced, because motivation is not a stable state of mind. Managers who can influence motivation can increase performance.

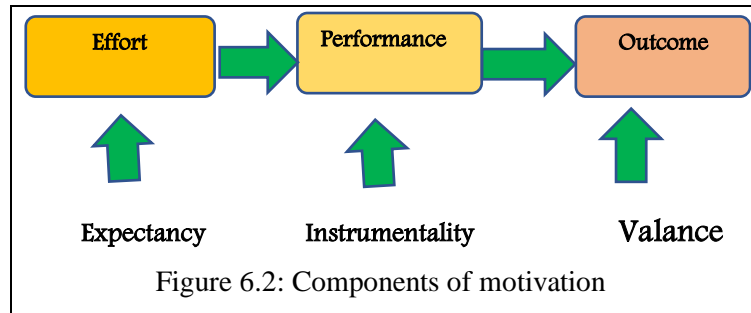
**The expectancy Framework** as designed by Professor Victor Vroom, assumes that motivation is a cognitive process and considers how workers feel about their efforts and how they're related to performance and outcome. Managers should understand how their employees feel about a situation if they're going to motivate them.

The framework is basic in that employees feel their efforts lead to good performance, and good performance leads to outcomes. The other components of motivation are:



First, **expectancy**. Expectancy asks, “Will more hard work achieve this goal?” This is the individual’s perception as to how difficult the target goal is to accomplish, or how much effort will need to go into accomplishing it.

Next, **instrumentality** comes into play. Instrumentality asks, “Will the outcome/reward actually be delivered as promised?” Finally, there’s **valence**. Valence asks, “Is this reward worth the work?”



### i) Mentoring/coaching

Mentoring or coaching is the act of giving advice about how to solve a problem without doing the work for the organization. The facilitator with his own knowledge can act as a mentor or coach and encourage these leaders to make the correct decisions until they are confident enough to manage their team by own without much guidance.

#### Case -6.2: Marija’s sales team

Marija, a new sales manager wants to incentivize her sales team to hit its Q4 sales target. She offers a \$1,000 reward to whoever is the top sales person at the end of the quarter.

##### Expectancy: “Will more hard work achieve this goal?”

Talented individuals on the sales staff are excited about that \$1,000 bonus, thinking that they only need to add one or two more deals to the ones that are already going to close, and they could be the one to grab the prize. However, Karen, who is closer to the bottom of the pack may decides that the work she would need to do in order to win simply isn’t feasible, and decides it isn’t worth it to put additional work in.

##### Instrumentality: “Will the outcome/reward actually be delivered as promised?”

Two years ago another sales manager proposed the same bonus plan, and the whole idea was dismissed as Q4 came to a close. One of the highest performing members of the team, David, had achieved the goal for the quarter, but he was not awarded the money, and told that it was due to the fact that he’d been on a performance improvement plan. Marija will need to work with her team to ensure that they trust that the promised outcome can be achieved.

##### Valance: “Is this reward worth the work?”

Is the \$1,000 bonus to the top performer enough? One salesperson might think, “Wow, I can pay off my credit card with an extra thousand dollars” and be very motivated to try for the top spot. However, another salesperson might think, “That’s not a lot of money, really. Only about \$650 after taxes.” The reward is not as motivating for that second salesperson. Adding the elements of expectancy, instrumentality and valance help us understand how individual perception figures into the expectancy framework. Now, let’s use that expectancy framework to help us understand the three components of motivation—individual, workplace and organization.

**Mentoring** is a “process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop them and become more effective”.

**Coaching** means an informal relationship between two people, of whom one has more experience and expertise than the other and offers advice and guidance as the latter learns; but coaching differs from mentoring by focusing on specific tasks or objectives, as opposed to more general goals or overall development.

Coaching and mentoring require **specific skillsets** to be more effective and to give a valuable experience to the mentee or coach. Coaching skills are goal setting; empathizing; questioning; giving feedback, intuition and checking. When mentoring skills are- open mindedness; active listening; questioning and looking at situations from different perspectives; honesty and transparency; self-awareness; and deep reflection. There are three main types of coaching styles that coaches can practice, depending on the coaching context and the needs of the coachee:

1. **Autocratic:** This style involves the coach making all the decisions and the coaches doing what they are told. It is a very disciplinarian and controlling style. This is usually the case for coaches that have a lot of experience and are highly knowledgeable in the area that they are coaching.
2. **Democratic:** This style involves both the coach and the coachee participating in decision making on the goals or how they will be achieved. The coach acts as a guide and a leader.
3. **Laissez-faire:** With this style, the coach makes very few decisions. The main focus is on influencing and teaching the coachee in areas that they are unsure of, but otherwise the coachee tends to be in control.

### iii) Leadership development

**Leadership development** is the process which helps expand the capacity of individuals to perform in leadership roles within organizations. Leadership roles are those that facilitate execution of organization's strategy through building alignment, winning mindshare and growing the capabilities of others. Leadership roles may be formal, with the corresponding authority to make decisions and take responsibility, or they may be informal roles with little official authority (e.g., a member of a team who influences team engagement, purpose and direction; a lateral peer who must listen and negotiate through influence. Leaders need to have vision and honest to be able to move an organization forward. They also are able to inspire their team to do good work. As a professional you might identify that leadership can be improved in the areas listed in table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Area of development	
Area	Explanation
<b>Consistency</b>	The ability to handle specific situations in the same way every time.
<b>Focus</b>	The ability to keep attention on the important activities or goals.
<b>Cooperation</b>	Ability to work well with others.
<b>Confidence</b>	The ability to believe in self-abilities and lead.
<b>Flexibility</b>	The ability to change plans when the situation changes.

### Concluding Remarks

To drive change in development the change maker must change himself as what he seems to see in others. Group dynamics are the forces resulting from the interactions of group members. Learning to manage these interactions will help the extension agent to facilitate change in a group more easily. It is to be remembered that the key to facilitation for development is learning how to manage the organizational performance and leadership development.

**Exercise:**

1). Name the elements of organizational change process

.....

2). Name three coaching skills

.....

3) What is leadership? Name any three area of development.

.....  
.....

4) Name three mentoring skills

.....



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## UNIT-3

## MEDIATION IN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKING

### Overview

In the Innovation Systems context, extension agents are sometimes described as mediator or brokers. A mediator is supposed to facilitate purposeful interactions between stakeholders. This study unit introduces the participants to the mediator function of an extension agent particularly in relation to creating strategic partnerships and networks for learning and innovation. It also increases ability of the extension professionals in managing participation, coordination and harmonization of service delivery processes.

### Objectives

The core objectives of the study unit are to:

Provide fundamental knowledge on mediation in linkages and strategic partnerships in AIS;  
Categorically explain the importance of partnership and network as effective tools of facilitation;  
Introduce participants with techniques of strategic partnerships; and  
Provide knowledge on networking, types of networks and networking hardware;

### Outcomes

Participant's knowledge levels improved on group facilitation in agro-advisory service;  
Participants are able to explain the importance of mediation in strategic partnerships, learning alliances and networks in promoting innovation;  
Attributes necessary for facilitation developed in extension agents;  
Extension agents are more efficient in planning and facilitation; and  
Confidence of extension professionals at mid and grass-root levels enhanced in undertaking facilitation.

**Period:** 4 hours and 30 minutes.



## SESSION-7:

## MEDIATION IN DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

### Session Overview

The session put lights on critical links and its identification; knowledge brokering, innovation and innovation brokering; market oriented extension service and Bangladesh's experience in market oriented extension service, techniques of facilitating linkage with market creating linkage with markets.

### Session Objectives

The core objectives of the session are to:

- i) Introduce participants with brokering knowledge and innovation in extension;
- ii) Provide basic knowledge on market oriented agricultural extension service; and
- iii) Enhance the skills on helping rural farmers establishing sustainable linkage with local and global markets.

### Session Outcomes

After completing the session, the participants will be able to:

- Identify critical links to match possible cooperation partners;
- Explain knowledge brokering; and
- Create linkage between farmers and markets.

### Introduction

Partnership mediation is a process of supporting and strengthening partnership through innovative and skilled management collaborative processes. It is a new and challenging ways of working in the field of EAS. Partnership mediators can be 'internal' (operating from within one of the partner organization) or 'external' (called in to provide specialist support when needed). To be efficient in delivering extension services in the new way the extension should have clear idea, necessary skills and expertise in mediating/brokering partnership among different service providing agencies sharing their resources, expertise and experiences. The participants are to impart training in the topic to the grassroots level workers of their respective organizations.

This session explains the importance of partnerships, describes what partnerships and networks are, what factors influence formation of partnerships, various stages of partnership formation & management and role of partnership in agricultural extension. The aim of the session is to provide information on how partnerships are understood, interpreted and implemented in the execution of extension in order to improve service delivery in the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) and other both public and private allied organizations working in agricultural extension and rural development. Further, the session focuses on market-oriented extension systems in Bangladesh and discussion on facilitation of linkages between farmers and market actors with necessary tips and examples.

A partnership is an on-going working relationship in which risks and benefits are shared. It is true that these features distinguish a partnership from other forms of collaboration. The success on mediation or brokering depends on the ability to develop a solid professional network of strategic partnerships, and then leverage those connections to provide the best possible service to their clients.

Partnerships, commonly known as role players, involved in the delivery of agricultural extension and advisory services. These include, for example, the government (DAE, DLS, DOF and DAM, etc.) which are the main actors), non-governmental organizations (BRAC, iDE, Action Aid, CCDB, Caritas, TMSS, ASHA, BARD, RDA, CIRDAP and RDRS, etc.), research organizations (BARI, BRRI and BINA etc.), academic institutions (BAU, BSMRAU, SAU etc.), commodity organizations (ACI, LaLTeer, Supreme Seeds, Mollika Seeds; farmers' organizations and other smaller groupings.

On the other hand, an alliance is a relationship among people, groups, or states that have joined together for mutual benefit or to achieve some common purpose, whether or not explicit agreement has been worked out among them. Members of an alliance are called allies. The public extension service

provided by the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) is now shifting its approach from top-down to more participatory and interactive in providing services, as the former has risks of bypassing resource-poor farmers.

#### Box 7.2: Tips on Partnership

- A partnership is an arrangement between two or more people to oversee business operations and share its profits and liabilities.
- In a general partnership company, all members share both profits and liabilities.
- Professionals like doctors and lawyers often form a limited liability partnership.
- There may be tax benefits to a partnership compared to a corporation.

#### Box 7.1: Ten key attributes for effective partnership

- A clear understanding between the partners of the word 'partnership'
- Agreement to a shared vision and common purpose
- Account and allowance being made for individual partners' interests
- The co-creation of design, decisions and solutions
- Commitment to sharing risks as well as benefits
- Every partner contributes resources (whether tangible or intangible)
- Partners share decision-making and leadership responsibilities
- Partners commit to mutual / horizontal accountability
- Partners work together to develop a principled approach to their partnering endeavors
- Attention is paid to the partnering process as well as the partnership's projects.

has taken policy for demand driven, pluralistic and group-based extension and advisory service. The success of this approach largely entails the use of partnerships in extension service.

Agricultural extension providing agencies and agri-business enterprises very often perceive working directly with smallholder producers as costly, time consuming and inefficient. While smallholders with less access to information and new technologies and production inputs blame extension service providers not support them adequately in producing agro-commodities and perceive that conditions and prices as offered by the enterprises are not workable. Hence, the role of the facilitators becomes essential to establish trust between farmers and service providers/agro-enterprises. The stakeholders need a space where they can learn, negotiate, and coordinate to overcome issues and capitalize on opportunities through a facilitated innovation process. Actors and their exchanges shape the innovation processes, their sustainability and the outcomes thereof. Partnerships between actors form the basis of innovation.

A partnership is a formal arrangement by two or more parties to manage and operate a business and share its profits. There are several types of partnership arrangements. In a particular, in partnership business, all partners share liabilities and profits equally, while in others, partners have limited liability.

**Box 7.3: Tips on partnership (contd.)**

**Networking:** To network is to make contact with different actors for the purpose of exchanging information and building professional relationships (GFRAS, 2016).

**Innovation brokers:** Teams of specialists that combine a strong background in science with knowledge of business and commercialization and/ or the creation of innovation networks. Innovation brokers are also known as change agents or technology brokers (World Bank, 2012).

**Partnership** is joint problem solving, learning, and innovation. May involve a formal contract or memorandum of understanding. May be less formal, such as participatory research. Highly interactive. May involve two or more organizations. Focused, objectively defined project (Saravanan & Bhattacharjee, 2017).

Partnerships between smallholder producers and agro-enterprises are rarely established without external facilitation. For the partnership to work and function well, both partners need to learn to understand each other's way of doing business, and establish an open and transparent communication through which expectations and issues can be discussed. There can be public sector partners, social partners, entrepreneurs, NGOs, the education and scientific sector, representatives of the civil society and many more. These partnerships include both formal and non-formal partnerships that should be put in place.

## Managing Partnership Process

Partnership is a journey with a number of options and routes to a desired destination. The partnership process manager who is termed as an accomplished and active go-between who helps partners to navigate their partnering journey by assisting them in co-creating a map, planning the most appropriate route, choosing their model(s) of transport and knowing when a change of direction is necessary. There are many circumstances where someone takes on the role of a partnership broker informally. Individuals can take on the role because they are driven by a strong sense of what is needed for the partnership to work and step up to take on typical brokering tasks out of experience or, often, gut instinct.

Partnership brokering roles, whether formally or informally, need a range of professional skills and personal attributes to be successful. The skilled management of partnership / collaboration processes is essential to create collaborative approaches that will lead an inclusive and sustainable in skills-building whenever and wherever possible.

## Common Partnering Challenges

Partnering is not always easy, but then if it is too easy may not be achieving very much. Complexity or challenges, rather than being ignored or avoided, can be great drivers to bring about change in our behaviour and habitual ways of operating. There are a number of common partnering challenges that are frequently reported by partnership brokers and identified in partnership reviews and case studies – the skill is to transform these challenges into new opportunities for 'doing different'.



## Innovation and Innovation Brokering

Innovation means literally "newness" or "renewal". The word comes from the Latin word '*innovare*'. In true sense, the ideas that can be innovations once these are implemented as new products, services or procedures. In agriculture innovation system is about people, the knowledge, technology, infrastructure and the cultures created or learned, the people working with and the new ideas they dealing. The approach represents a major change in the way that the production of knowledge is viewed and thus supported. It shifts attention away from research and the supply of science and technology, towards the whole process of innovation.

Innovation in agriculture is oriented towards the diffusion process of technologies in the rural context. Although innovation relies on invention and considerable creativity, yet, innovation and invention are not the same things. Innovation does, however, involve more than a change from one well-established way of doing things to another well-established practice.

### Box 7.4: Professional Skills and personal attributes needed by those in partnership brokering roles:

- Understanding of the specific opportunities and challenges of partnering as a paradigm
- Confidence in holding space for difficult conversations and breakthrough ideas to emerge
- Empathy for different perspectives, values and constraints
- Good judgment about what is / is not possible
- Facilitation & negotiation skills that are suitably tailored for a partnership model
- Communication – specifically the ability to synthesize and communicate complex information
- Coaching and a strong commitment to building the capacity of partners to partner well
- Balancing imagination / vision for the partnership with the discipline / rigour needed to deliver it.

The diffusion of agricultural innovations is a process whereby new ways of doing things are spread within and between agrarian communities.

### Box 7.5: Ten common partnering challenges

1. Lack of partnering experience, skills and confidence
2. Governance contradictions – horizontal alongside vertical accountabilities
3. The wrong paperwork – documentation that is not fit for partnering purpose
4. Not counting what counts – too much focus on money and not enough on other types of contribution
5. Poor communication – especially when partnering 'long-distance'
6. Too many comings and goings – turnover of key people and loss of 'partnership memory'
7. Loss of momentum
8. Reverting too quickly to 'business as usual' rather than challenging and changing the norms
9. An ever-changing operating context – over which the partnership has little control
10. The ever-ticking clock – whether in the form of lack of time to devote to key priorities or in the speed of change and urgency of need.

According to Rogers (1983), the diffusion of innovations includes the communication of information, by various means i.e., sets of alternative actions. The facilitation of innovation is a flexible and adaptive process during which facilitator(s) organize dialogue, and kindle collective problem analysis by multiple stakeholders to overcome problems. Facilitation involves not only influencing the way farmers think and make decisions, but how other stakeholders behave too.

It is obvious different stakeholders have different interest and are not interested to cooperate or sharing information, further compete with each other. Here the facilitator has crucial role in influencing the stakeholders so that they agree on common goals and activities.

These system-level changes need careful facilitation (Dror, I, 2016). By and large, innovation brokers link public, private and civil organizations, input suppliers, producers, transporters, traders and national & international agri-food processors (Klerkx and Leeuwis 2009). The concept of ‘innovation broker’ is derived from the notion of an ‘honest broker’, who gets people together mainly for unselfish purposes (Obstfeld, 2005).

Innovation brokering typically comprises the following functions, to be applied in a flexible and frequentative manner (Klerkx and Leeuwis 2009).

- ◆ **Analyzing the context and articulating demand:** The participatory assessment of problems and opportunities through quick system diagnosis identifies promising entry points (in terms of prospective markets), supportive policy, and constraining factors to be overcome.
- ◆ **Composing networks:** Facilitate linkages among relevant actors—specifically, by scanning, scoping, filtering, and matchmaking possible partners that have complementary resources such as knowledge, technology, and funding.
- ◆ **Facilitating interaction:** Action planning, along with the identification of and support to those taking leadership in multi-stakeholder activities, has the main objective of building functioning stakeholder coalitions. Considering the different backgrounds of the actors involved, coalition building requires continuous “translation” between actors, the building of trust, establishing working procedures, fostering learning, demotivating, managing conflict, and intellectual property management.

## Knowledge Mediation

Knowledge mediation is a popular approach to enhance research uptake and use, moving beyond mere diffusion of research results through reviews, leaflets and summaries. It is broadly about filtering relevant research, translating research into plain language and helping people to make sense of and apply information, and establishing a connection between research producers and research users. Ideally knowledge brokering not only take place after research has been finished, but also focus on communication between research producers and users during research processes (Lomas 2007; Neef and Neubert 2011). This implies that knowledge brokering is not only about enhancing ‘research pull’ and facilitating collaboration between researchers and research users to promote a process of joint knowledge assembling, which boost research impact. Knowledge mediation or brokering is changing paradigms on change and innovation in agricultural sector. Implications of knowledge brokering in agricultural sector are as follows:

## Market Oriented Extension Services

The agricultural environment is changing with unprecedented rapidity and in a very diverse way as consequences of market liberalization and globalization. The urban population in Bangladesh along with other Asiatic countries is increasing dramatically and is accompanied by higher incomes and changing food habits and dietary demands leading to greater demands of high value agro-food commodities. There is a rapid increase of value addition opportunities relative to primary production. Diets of both urban and rural households are changing and increasingly including more animal products, such as fish, meat and dairy products, as well as fruits and vegetables.

The availability of new technologies for production, post-harvest and transport has also changed demand by making possible delivery of products in new forms. These changes created market and employment opportunities for rural farm households.

The changed situation also presenting challenges for farmers to adapt their farming systems to meet the demands of the market. On the other hand, there has been a declining public investment in agricultural development, particularly in extension services. The apparent future of the smallholding farmers is bleak, unless they can adapt their farming systems to these changes. With a view to survive and prosper in future, farming needs to become more competitive and profitable. Most of the constraints facing small farmers are related to a lack of adequate know-how and skills. Market oriented agricultural advisory services can play an important role in helping small farmers to overcome these constraints, and are essential component of the wider range of services that are needed to contribute to poverty alleviation. To maintain a viable livelihood, small producers need to move from a focus on production for home consumption and occasional marketing of surpluses to production for the market.

The changes have led to advisory services changing their role and focus. In response to these changes, many countries in Asia are changing the content of their extension messages to farmers and their mode of delivery. Extension is now pluralistic with a refocus on marketing, value addition and enterprise skills development. At present technology transfer is less relevant and farmers and other entrepreneurs have to innovate and respond to the market. Public services are being decentralized and efforts are being made to engage more scrupulously with the private sector, farmer organizations through several development project interventions. Other changes taking place include decentralization, leading to a quest for demand-responsive services; a drive towards national food security; expansion of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and extended role of the private sector. Experts opined that it is the markets, not the producers that drive agricultural development. At present farmers are at the juncture of greater opportunities and increased competition and risks. With limited information on prices and buyers, limited negotiating and bargaining skills, lack of access to financial services, insufficient marketing and business support services, limited integration into competitive value chains, inadequate business management skills, and inadequate access to value adding technology, the farmers, particularly the small farmers are becoming more vulnerable to risks of making profit from farming.

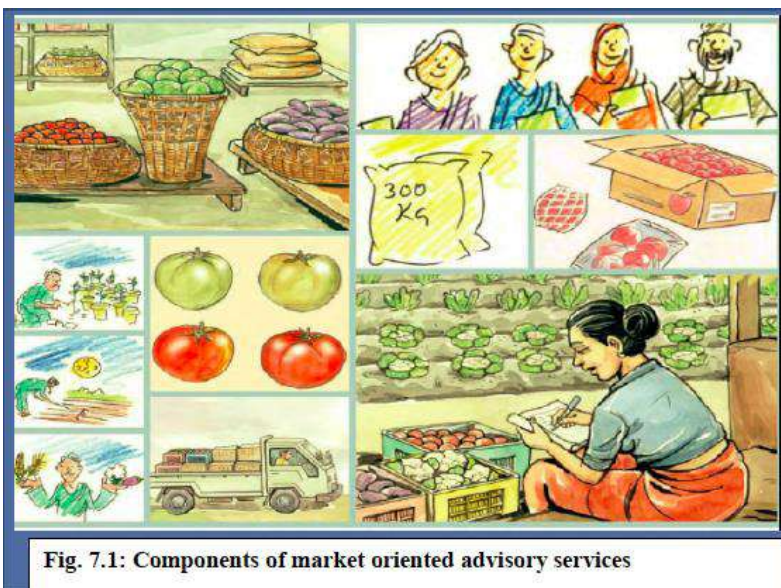


Fig. 7.1: Components of market oriented advisory services

The concept of market oriented advisory services, covers a range of economic, social, technical and legal services that provide technical know-how about how to improve quality and quantity and timing of production, etc., information related to economics, business management and markets, knowledge and skills of value chain management, actors to meet market and quality requirements. These include both public and private sector support services as providers and clients. Market-oriented advice requires production and market information, technical assistance in business, marketing, organizational development and contracting supported by financial institutions, private dealers and traders and ICT. The broad range of service provided from a diverse range of service delivery mechanisms has the potential to commercialize farming and accelerate diversification into high value products that offer considerable potential for employment generation and productivity growth.

### Basic requirements for market oriented advisory services

The most important issues for market-oriented services include, i) ways and means of creating a conducive and enabling environment that promotes a pluralistic approach; ii) making public sector extension service cost-effective; iii) reaching small farmers more effectively; iv) encouraging private sector to invest and v) harmonizing commercial and development objectives. Following steps are required for promoting market oriented advisory service in agriculture.

- Creating conducive and enabling environment for pluralistic demand driven extension service through promoting producer's group formation all over the country by the public service providing agencies and capacity enhancement of the farmers to operate groups sustainably. Development of lead farmer/village level extension workers and their capacity development;
- Designing and implementing training programs on the basis of client's demand and content developing matching with the needs of the target groups;
- Capacity building of Grass-root level extension workers to carryout facilitation and organizing farmer's training with appropriate training materials;
- Improving cost-effectiveness of extension services, public sector management performance, integration of elements of market-oriented extension service into the day-to-day work of extension personnel; and
- Ensuring accountability of extension service provision at all levels for the public service providing agencies.

It is needless to mention that the advisory service by itself not enough for farm to fork movement of agro-commodities, rather it needs to be supplemented by a more “tangible” commercial services including-input supply, product development, quality management, packing, collection and transport, providing insurance cover and ICT facilities.

### Bangladesh's Experience in Market-Oriented Extension Service

The Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), the main extension service providing agency for crop agriculture production in Bangladesh. In other sub-sectors like livestock, fisheries and agro-forestry extension service even for production is meager. With a view to revamp the sector with integration of processing, value addition and marketing in the domestic and global market, a holistic approach involving business enterprises and private organization is inevitable.

The government of Bangladesh is moving towards the goal with policy and administrative support and promoting the growth and development of private sector agribusiness to provide agricultural inputs and sell commodities and finished products. Supermarkets are procuring raw materials through contractual arrangements with suppliers and farmers to buy fresh produce directly from them. Seed companies are also producing seed under contract as part of seed multiplication systems. Some of these businesses, in addition to their commercial function, are involved in providing advice on agricultural technologies as well as marketing.

In addition to production, public sector institution, the Department of Agricultural Marketing (DAM) have assisted farmers to access markets through the formation of farmer marketing groups and are linking them to market outlets. These initiatives have tended to take place through donor funded projects namely the World Bank's National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) and Bangladesh Integrated Agricultural Productivity Project (IAPP), Asian Development Bank's Northwest Crop Diversification Project (NCDP), Second Crop Diversification Project (SCDP) and Agribusiness Development Project (ADP) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)'s Smallholder Agricultural Competitiveness Project (SACP) under the Ministry of Agriculture.



Extension staff and farmers lack knowledge of marketing and market management and have little working experience in market-oriented extension services. Farmers often produce commodities in abundance, creating seasonal gluts and resulting in low prices. This is happening because of an absence of reliable information on market demand and prices, weak post-harvest handling leading to low quality produce and weak market infrastructure and logistic facilities culminating in limited market access.

A national agricultural extension policy framework has been developed covering the roles and responsibilities of all public sector institutions. As a whole the system needs to be performed considering the structures, functions, clientele, staffing pattern and budgetary mechanisms. The entire extension services system including DAM needs to be reoriented to include both production and market-oriented extension. Support is needed to develop the capacity of these institutions to refocus themselves to address the changes in agriculture more effectively. Interventions in the area of extension staff capacity building is vital as part of an overall restructuring of the institutional system. Finally, support is also required to forge a private-public partnership to plan and develop market-oriented infrastructure.

### Recommendations for Facilitating Farm to Fork Linkage

Facilitating access to markets addressing the upstream and downstream market challenges can strengthen the economic sustainability of small and commercial farms. Farmers can be linked to markets through traders, farmers' organizations, agri-food processors, retailers, large hotels and supermarkets or through formal contracts with large buyers under contract farming arrangements. Farmers can also supply food to the public sector, for instance for schools and hospitals, under institutional procurement processes. The following services can facilitate farmers' access to markets:

- i) **Situation Analysis:** Diagnostic analysis of the selected farms or farmers to be conducted to identify the gaps and/areas of intervention.
- ii) **Training and capacity building:** Providing support to farmers to market access training and study tours based on skills and knowledge gaps offered to producers.
- iii) **Technical Support:**
  - Providing on-farm technical assistance/advice to deciduous fruit producers on a regular basis depending on the individual grower's needs.
  - Providing once-off on-farm technical training to producers of other commodities through outsourced commodity/product specialists based on the specific need of the farmers.
- iv) **Facilitation of market access/linkages and market development:**
  - Facilitate market linkages between farmers and various markets e.g. processors, local supermarkets, municipal markets, hospitality, etc.
  - Potential linkages of producers with overseas markets are also supported through market development.
  - Assisting with logistical arrangements.
- v) **Food Safety/Compliance with GAP**
  - Supporting farmers to comply with GAP and promoting GAP certification program addressing basic food safety requirements including traceability of fresh produces from the point of production to the retailer until it reaches the final consumer and record keeping of all activities during the production of fresh produce, hygiene and judicious use of agro-chemicals such as pesticides, fungicides and fertilizers.
  - Monitoring producers (and providing support where possible) in addressing non-conformances.

### Case 7.1: Agricultural Innovation Brokering Initiatives in India

Several types of innovation brokers have emerged in India. They have taken different organizational forms, they operate at different levels in the innovation system, and their scope of innovation differs. International Development Enterprises. In India and Bangladesh, an international NGO, International Development Enterprises (iDE), acted as a broker in the process of developing innovations for low-cost irrigation pumps. (In Bangladesh, aside from coordinating interaction among actors in the irrigation pump supply chain, IDE also coordinated interaction with policy makers.) Because of IDE's intervention, the focus broadened from developing a particular technology to realizing the vision of effective irrigation water provision for the poor. Institutional innovations were the key to realizing that vision and included changing the incentives for public and private actors and creating effective demand for the technology so that a self-sustaining market could emerge. IDE acted as a local innovation consultant as well as an instrument for systemic innovation.

Using ICT and social media are playing role to build awareness of innovations and other information. To truly benefit from farmers' creativity and experimentation, several initiatives use ICT and social media to identify and build awareness of little-known innovations. Participants can share experiences and scale up successful efforts. These initiatives are hybrids of an innovation consultant, a peer network broker, and a ICT-based platform that helps to articulate demands and build networks. Examples include the Honeybee Network and Villagro Network, which scout for innovations for their databases and connect innovators to supporting agencies such as India's National Innovation Foundation. The networks also help participants to patent innovations and find investors to develop products. Sustainable inventions from the Honey Bee database comprise 34 categories, including agricultural tools and techniques, water conservation, health, education innovation, food and nutrition, traditional medicine, and industrial and household goods. (Example of specific innovations includes a motorcycle-driven plow for farmers who cannot afford tractors or bullocks and matchsticks made of natural fibers sourced from agricultural waste.) Still other efforts use ICT-based brokering instruments ("infomediaries") to share operational (market and production production) information. Sources: Gupta et al. 2003 [6]; Hall, Clark, and Naik 2007; Murthy 2010; see also [www.ideorg.org](http://www.ideorg.org), [www.honeybee.org](http://www.honeybee.org), and [www.villagro.org](http://www.villagro.org)

### Case 7.2: The Need for Innovation Brokering: Supplying Potatoes for Processing in Kenya

In Kenya, DEEPA Industries Ltd. expanded its potato crisp production capacity from 2 to 12 tons a day, but its fully automated production line required a steady supply of high-quality potatoes. The International Potato Center (CIP) and the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) organized and facilitated a meeting in 2005 to see if an arrangement could be brokered between the processor and potato producer groups in Bomet District. During the meeting, agreements were reached on a fixed price for farmers' produce, transport arrangements, and the regular supply of produce.

The parties also agreed that the local public extension office would support the producer organization's efforts to supply the processor. No stable source of funds for continued brokering beyond this one-off meeting could be identified to continue supporting development of this emerging beneficial relationship between actors. The transporter of the first shipment sold the high quality potatoes destined for the processor elsewhere for a higher price and replaced them with potatoes of lower quality. The processor declined to accept further deliveries from the producers because they did not meet the quality requirements, with the result that a constant supply of potatoes did not materialize. The processor had to scale down his ambition of exporting to other East African countries. A structured and sustained innovation brokering effort could have made a big impact by building a working coalition between the different stakeholders in the innovation process.

A more harmonized and effective contribution by research, extension, the private sector, and producers would have been possible through a clearly mandated broker. Three years later, in the context of a development project funded by the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), CIP and KARI renewed efforts to broker organizational innovation. Meetings are being organized to build trust and structure communication and economic interactions between the actors. Currently research, agricultural extension, producer groups, and DEEPA are innovating within the production chain by using high-quality, clean seed, contract farming, direct purchasing, local collection of the produce, and testing new genetic material for quality in crisp processing. Sources: D. Borus and P. Gildemacher, CIP, Nairobi.

### Case 7.3: Public-private pineapple partnership raised income and livelihood in the Chattogram Hill Tracts, Bangladesh

Capacity Development in Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS) is a global partnership under the financial support from EU that aims to strengthen the capacity of countries and key stakeholders to innovative in the context of complex agricultural systems to improve rural livelihoods. Its goal is to promote innovation that meets the need of small farmers, small and medium-sized agribusiness and consumers. To do so, CDAIS brings together key stakeholders in agricultural innovation systems on pineapple cluster in Bandarban which is an important pineapple growing area with limited market access of the poor farmers pineapple cluster such as; access to resources and market linkages, lack of assured, remunerative pineapple markets, weak farmers group, high cost of inputs and credit, lack of knowledge on processing, value addition and post-harvest managements.

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In the CNA the following tools / effects such as;(i) Net mapping- deepen understanding of stakeholders; (ii) Capacity assessment methods were used such as (a) Timeline- tool for group reflection; (b) Problem/solution tree- stimulates thinking on causes and questionnaire- assessment of partnership strength and identification of gap (c) Visioning- critical role in creation of change and finally, and (d) Action planning- defining initial objectives of partnership and functional capacity needs.

Through CDAIS intervention the pineapple growers established ‘Bandarban Pineapple Cooperative Society’ comprised of 22 members. The CDAIS organized capacity building trainings and workshops where the cooperatives members participated and gathered new knowledge on innovations. The CDAIS also helped to negotiate or link farmers with local traders and Aratder (Commissioned Agent) in Chattogram city areas. As a result, pineapple grower had an opportunity to direct access into the bigger market. building capacity by the CDAIS interventions, the group members became sensitized and worked actively in partnership approach. For example, Jessi Chakma, a resident of Gethsimony para, Shualok Union, Bandarban Sadar Upazila and Treasurer of the Pineapple Cooperative Society. She is a pineapple grower having 2.5 hectares of land. She has a family of 4 members. Before, she sold her pineapple to the local traders or local bazar with very a minimum price that made her unhappy due to low price of quality pineapples. When she started group marketing with the support of CDAIS she was able to send pineapples to the bigger market and received fair price. Like Ms. Jessi, all the members of the cooperative society were benefitted. Now they all are more capable in bargaining and negotiating with bigger traders in Chattogram city markets. This facilitation allowed her to earn double than the amount she received earlier. Now her income is about TK. 1, 52,300 per year that is about 82.2% increase over the previous income. Finally, she happily quoted that ‘Group marketing is very effective for raising our bargaining power for getting fair price’.

Source: Personal contact with Dr. Mohammed Jamal Uddin, National Innovation Facilitator, CDAIS, Pineapple Cluster, Bangladesh; E-mail: [jamaluddin1971@yahoo.com](mailto:jamaluddin1971@yahoo.com)

## SESSION-8: LEARNING ALLIANCES AND NETWORKING

### Session Overview

This module introduces participants to pluralistic extension approach in AIS, its effectiveness and conceptual framework of pluralistic extension approach, learning alliances and networking to increase effectiveness of extension services in third world countries including Bangladesh. It gives light to various actors present in agriculture and rural development in Bangladesh and the issue of coordination in pluralistic extension system.

### Session Objectives

The objectives of the session are:

- Introducing participants with the concept of pluralistic extension system, learning alliance, types of alliances and networking for providing efficient and demand driven extension service in agriculture and rural development in Bangladesh;
- Improving participant's knowledge base on innovative extension approaches for leveraging small farmers' access to the extension service; and
- Enhance the efficiency of participants in establishing and maintaining effective alliances and networks in AIS in Bangladesh.

### Session Outcomes

After completion of this session, the participants will be able to:

- Coordinate pluralistic service provision within the Agricultural Innovation System;
- Explain the concept of action learning and reflective practitioners; and
- Explain how effective network can be established.

### Introduction

Learning is the fundamental ingredient of change and development. We are continuously learning wherever we are and whatever we do. Learning from others and sharing self-learning can accelerate the progress and reduce the mistakes. A learning alliance is a diverse network of individuals committed to improving knowledge on a specific topic. Alliances are often made up of small networks of public, private and/or civil society actors seeking further changes towards development. Learning alliances are based on innovation systems, and these partnerships can play a key role in extension by sharing information, knowledge and experience of those organizations working with farmers. On the other hand, Networking is the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions. Networks whether local, national or international are important endeavors toward progress.

It is important for different actors to be linked together in a network so that the whole system benefits from these relationships, knowledge flows and learning from each other's experiences, rather than reinventing the wheel and working in isolation.



The session will put light on the insights of learning, learning process, learning alliance and networking techniques & maintenance. It will help to enrich the participant's knowledge and improve their ability to build learning alliances, which will help to harmonize practices and approaches for facilitating change. This is important in the context of pluralistic service providing on the part of public and private sector agencies.

## Pluralistic Service Provision in AIS

Pluralism is bringing together two or more organizations at one platform in the efforts of delivering extension services to promote production and productivity when pluralistic extension service is an appropriate mix of public and private funding and delivery mechanisms. This is a modal of using both public and non-public institution for delivering extension services to the farming communities.

### i) Pluralistic Extension Service

Varieties of public and private agricultural & rural advisory services are available now-a-days in different countries leading to pluralistic agricultural extension services, where services are provided by different actors when funds are provided by different actors and funded from different sources. This is generally regarded as an important step forward, away from reliance on monolithic, mostly state-led Agricultural Extension Services.

Pluralistic Agricultural Extension Services have the potential to overcome constraints related to funding, staffing and expertise, and to make advice available to hundreds of millions of small-scale farmers in need. Pluralistic extension services help to bridge the cracks between service providers and remain in the forefront of Pluralistic Agricultural Extension Service.

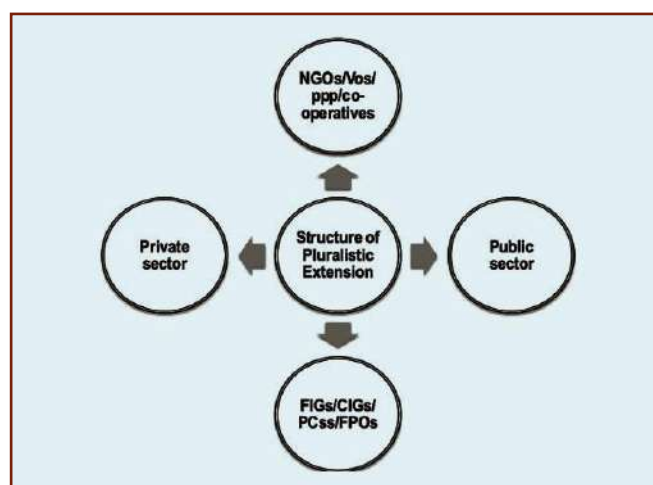


Figure 8.1: Components of pluralistic extension service Source: Ravi, K.N., 2016 (. <https://www.slideshare.net/RaviKn2/pluralistic-agricultural-extension-in-india>)

Strengthening of pluralistic extension service is essential for the following purposes:

- To address the needs of different hierarchical stakeholders (small, marginal and big farmers);
- Effective utilization of resources;
- Combined influence on ToT (Transfer of Technology);
- Widespread extension services as per the need of clients;
- Collaboration and partnerships to encourage speedy disbursement of technology and input linkages;
- Overcome the major weakness of single extension agency operations;
- Effective utilization of ICTs and its innovations; and
- Create competitive environment in providing services to farmers.

Pluralistic agricultural extension system is pertinent to find appropriate mix of public and private funding delivery mechanisms and try to take extension services to all the stakeholders.

The dwindling government funding for agricultural extension in developing countries and the call on extension organizations to support farm households' livelihood security initiatives, has made the practice of pluralistic extension a realistic option for ensuring efficient and effective use of available resources for extension and sustainable development.

From the above discussion it is more or less clear that pluralistic service provision is different from traditional extension services, which includes NGOs, autonomous bodies and private extension service providers, working together to support rural farmer in their socio-economic development. It is an important part of extension provision as it makes provision for the differences in farming systems and local situations each farmer has. It is beneficial in the AIS because it makes a range of different services available to individuals or groups who need tailor-made support to reach their development goals. A growing variety of public and private rural advisory services are available today, leading to increasingly “pluralistic service systems (PSS), in which advisory services are provided by different actors and funded from different sources. However, these PSS and the way they operate are still poorly understood. In particular, how PSS can effectively respond to demands of heterogeneous farmers in contexts where small-scale agriculture increasingly needs to exploit value addition and adapt to market requirements.

Implementation of decentralized and pluralistic extension services has the potential to lead to increased availability of actors providing extension services to farmers in most of the developing countries like Bangladesh. What is unique about extension services providers is that they have a shared goal of improving agricultural productivity.

## ii) Prospects and Potentials of Pluralistic Agro-advisory Services in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh extension service is provided by and large by the public agencies. The Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) and other allied agencies with their field functionaries working at the grass root, despite much strength, these services have not achieved as expected. Therefore, presently the extension system is witnessing a shift, moving towards engaging more and more agencies to cater to the diverse needs of the farming community. This is what is referred to as the ‘Pluralism’.

The current National Extension Strategy aims to enhance client oriented and multi actor’s extension and advisory services, facilitate market linkage and enhance value chains development and enhance institutional arrangements, coordination and linkages among key agricultural development partners. But due to institutional framework pluralistic agricultural extension and advisory services provision has not yet been in place.

The agricultural and rural development service providers in Bangladesh include several public extension service providers, autonomous institutes/organizations, donor supported rural development programs, international and local NGOs, private agro-chemical suppliers, and commodity processors. The categories and the actors within them are highlighted in the following sections.

- **Public Extension and Community Development Service Providers:** All conventional public agricultural organizations, DAE, DLS, DoF, BRDB, Directorate of Cooperatives, DAM, etc.
- **Agricultural Research Organizations:** This category comprises traditional public agricultural research establishments that are indirectly involved in technology transfer and farmer’s capacity building through farmer’s participatory research and training programs.
- **Autonomous Institutes/Organizations:** This category includes organizations like Hortex Foundation, Polly Karma Sahayak Foundation, Rural Development Academy, Bogra and BARD Cumilla, etc. are working for the capacity enhancement of rural people in production and value addition and marketing of agro-commodities.
- **Donor Supported Rural Development Projects and Programs:** Several donors supported projects and programs are being implemented and in implementation stage are acting in rural development and agricultural extension in the country. Some of these are- NATP, LDDP, FtF of USAID, JICA, GTZ, FAO, WB, Oxfam, ADB, IDB etc. Such initiatives are usually well-defined vehicles of agricultural extension and rural development.

- **International and Local NGOs:** A number of local and international NGOs, like Katalyst, iDE, DAI, TMSS, BRAC, Caritas, Solidaridat, RDRS, etc. are active players in the local agricultural extension system. These organizations are directly or indirectly working at the grassroots level for agriculture and rural development. NGOs are known for being relatively well endowed with financial resources for their programs, their great mobility, and drive for bottom-up & group approaches, etc. Some NGOs are associated with great strides in rural development, they have also been accused of promoting donor-dependency, and their rural development programs are criticized for lack of sustainability.
- **Farmer's Associations:** Farmers' unions and associations like 'Mango growers Association', emerged as actors not only because they represent their members on the economic development but also they are active in capacity building programs and the dissemination of production and marketing information.
- **Private Agrochemicals and other Input Suppliers:** Virtually all of the private companies that supply agrochemicals, seeds and fertilizers are directly or indirectly involved in agricultural extension as part of their marketing strategy to increase farmers' awareness of products, achieve a competitive edge and increase market share. Subcategories of these actors include seed companies, fertilizer association pesticides companies and credit institutions. Notable agro-processors in Bangladesh are Bombay Sweets, PRAN and Milk Vita etc.
- **Commodity Processors and Exporters:** This group of actors is on the periphery of agricultural extension providers, because they are only partially involved in such efforts. Their involvement normally stems from: i) the need to provide information about specific technical production aspects to the groups of farmers who produce on contract basis on their behalf; and ii) for the same groups of farmers. Commodity processors and exporters have also been known to disseminate information on quality and other standards that make either processing easier or exports acceptable.

### Coordination of Pluralistic Service Provision within the AIS

From the above it has been clear that pluralistic extension service has the capacity to reach more farmers with diversified services needed by the farming community. However, in some cases these service providers differ in their knowledge regarding the practices or knowledge that is required to improve agricultural productivity. Lack of shared knowledge among providers has contributed to delivery of uncoordinated and duplication of efforts thereby limiting the effectiveness of services delivery. Moreover, in some cases lack of shared knowledge has contributed towards provision of conflicting information which has left farmers confused. Enhancing coordination and collaboration among these representatives is of paramount importance if their efforts to improve agricultural productivity are to be successful. To promote coordination between organizations that work with farmers it is necessary to organize platforms where organizations from different sectors can interact.

**First**, they use stakeholder consultative planning workshop to create a forum where the extension capabilities of various extension providers are identified and this information is used to plan extension activities and the ways of collaboration with other extension providers.

**Second**, conducting advisory services in the issue where the service providing organizations, have interest, brought together to develop a coordinated approach. These interactions provide opportunities for the organizations to build relationships and to understand each other's aims, roles, activities, and capabilities. For effective pluralistic extension service provision, the actors have to work hand in hand.

The public sector, specifically the Ministry of Agriculture retains the mandate to coordinate and regulate the playing field for extension pluralism. Government has to facilitate and provide regulatory services in the process of giving pluralistic extension services by multiple extension service providers.

To strengthen pluralistic extension services, the following actions are suggested.

- **Creating alignment between public and other agricultural extension actors:** This is critical to bring about a concerted effort that will ensure knowledge and information sharing, improve quality and coverage of extension services. Moreover, effective alignment and coordination avoids unnecessary duplication of efforts, wastage of resources and boost outcomes.
- **Developing an enabling environment for private extension providers:** Private extension providers play an important role in increasing access to farmers and addressing gaps in extension services provision. To maximize their contribution, it is important to analyze the challenges faced by the private extension providers and the extent of their current contributions to the agriculture sector.

### Case 8.1. Pluralistic services in Central Asia and the Caucasus

In early 1990s, a new system over delivery of advisory services was gradually created. Existing system of the EAS in the Central Asia and the Caucasus (CAC) region strongly differ in the countries. In some countries there are other EAS systems which are more pluralistic in composition, and consist of public, private, and non-commercial entities that are involved in delivery of advisory services. In many countries of CAC region, the extension and advisory services were initially introduced by development agencies and implemented as projects/programs, or the components of the national agricultural development programs or projects. Those initiatives were aimed at introducing new technologies to farmers; rendering consulting services; revealing the needs and interests of agricultural producers, organizing trainings for service providers; and providing information and knowledge support to rural areas.

Main and combined types of EAS in the CAC region:

1. Government: Ministries of Agriculture, Agencies on Land Reclamation, Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Scientific Production Centre, etc.
2. Non-government/public and private: Associations of Farmers, professional agricultural consultants, water users, agribusinesses, agronomist cooperatives, independent consultancy centers, specialized NGOs, agro shops (suppliers of production equipment), etc.
3. Donor projects: World Bank, FAO, ADB, GIZ, USAID, JICA, UNDP, EU, Aga Khan Fund, Mercy Corps, ACTED, Care, Oxfam, Helvetius providing project/program-based consultancy services to households and farmers.
4. Public Private Partnerships.
5. Donor-supported initiatives led by NGOs.
6. Sector-wide and large investment projects by government and donors.
7. Pluralistic services.

The government has to put in place an enabling policy, guidelines and directives that clearly inform their roles via capacity building, provision of credit facilities and support in the development of necessary infrastructure. As a result of their full capacity, it is indispensable to ensure that the services of the private sector are acceptable and affordable to significant number of farmers.; and

- **Guideline development:** The government is to develop a clear guideline on pluralistic extension services. The guideline should clearly outline the roles and duties to be played by each service providers and put in place accountability measures.

### Alliance for Effective Pluralistic Extension Service

An alliance is relationship among people, groups, or states that have joined together for mutual benefit or to achieve some common purpose, whether or not explicit agreement has been worked out among them. Alliance form in many settings and working together as an alliance can provide efficiency in planning and



the allocation of resources, sharing of knowledge, skills and ideas, and increased impetus in working towards the common goal. Resultants of alliance process offer greater understanding of the capacity and limitations of different partner sectors, NGOs and private sector can offer concentrated focus at the village level, financial support, community development expertise, ability to involve the poorest farmers and ability to reach remote areas and work with ethnic minorities.

Further, government staff can offer technical advice and extension planning and reporting expertise at a broader level and contribute in overviewing national agricultural situations. Above all benefits to the farmers and other stakeholders, not only from the new technology, but also from support offered in its delivery through the alliance.

### i) Strategic Alliance

A strategic alliance is a voluntary, formal arrangement between two or more parties to pool resources to achieve a common set of objectives that meet critical needs while remaining independent entities. Strategic alliances involve exchange, sharing, or co-development of products, services, procedures, and processes. To these ends, strategic alliances can- in fact, frequently do-call on contributions of organization-specific resources and capabilities (that may involve trade-offs in capital, control and time). Strategic alliances between organizations are now ubiquitous. Depending on the objectives or structure of the alliance, these can take various configurations along a continuum of cooperative arrangements, e.g. cartels, cooperatives, joint ventures, equity investments, licensing, subcontracting (outsourcing), franchising, distribution relationships, research and development consortium, action sets, innovation networks, clusters, letter of intent, memorandums of understanding, partnership framework, etc. some are short-lived; others are the prelude to a merger. In the public sector there are 3 main types of strategic alliances and these are as follows:

- **Joint Venture:** A joint venture occurs when two or more parent companies form a smaller (child) company together. Partners can choose between a 50/50 joint venture, in which both parent companies own an equal portion of the child company, and a majority-owned venture. In a majority-owned venture, for example, one partner company could own 80% of the child company, while the other partner owned the remaining 20%.
- **Equity Alliance:** For an equity alliance to occur, one company must purchase a specific percentage of equity in another company.
- **Non-equity Alliance:** A non-equity alliance occurs when two companies mutually agree on a contractual relationship which allocates specific resources, assets, or other means to one another. Many of the previous strategic partnership examples are also considered non-equity alliances.

### ii) Learning Alliance

A learning alliance is a diverse network of individuals committed to improving knowledge on a specific topic. Learning alliance are often made up of small networks of public, private and/or civil society actors seeking to further social or political change. Learning alliances in agriculture and rural development are partnerships established between organizations such as research institutes, government agencies, private enterprise and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) to identify, share and develop proven agricultural practices with farmers.

Learning alliances are based on innovation systems theory and have been developed by organizations working with rural farming families in developing countries. These partnerships can play a key role in extension by sharing information, knowledge and experience of those working with farmers

Learning alliances consists of a series of facilitated meetings or informal exchanges between stakeholders with a common advocacy interest. Learning alliance may be described as a partnership between research, development and other organizations, which jointly implement a set of activities in an area of mutual interest and begin a process of learning from the activities (Douthwaite *et al.* 2009), Lundey et al. 2005) grasps. There are four major benefits in forming learning alliances:

- i) Develop and share successful approaches and methodologies, as well as knowledge about why successes or failures occurred;
- ii) Expand learning opportunities for participant;
- iii) Promote synergy through collaboration; and
- iv) Provide a flexible mechanism adaptable to many fields of interest.

### Key Factors in the Successful Establishment of a Learning Alliance

The success of a learning alliance depends on some basic elements described below:

- Defining partnership based on mutually agreed objectives, pursued through shared understanding of the most rational division of labour based on the respective comparative advantages of each partner.
- According to Brinkerhoff (2002), there are two measurable dimensions of partnership. The first is **mutually** i.e. encompassing mutual dependence, mutual commitment to goals and objectives, and the extent to which these are consistent and supportive of each other's mission and values. The second is **organizational identity**; defining that which is distinctive and enduring in a particular organization, and that organization's ability to maintain its core beliefs and values across time and contexts.

Several studies in the relevant field reveals that successful partnerships maximize mutually through:

- Focusing on commonalities in philosophy, aims and objectives
- Focusing on common interest in both the particular field, and in working together
- Ensuring that partners benefit equally from the partnership
- Ensuring that staff with appropriate expertise are included in the planning and management
- Building the capacity of staff, both in the area of interest and in the practices of working together
- Promoting understanding and trust between staff through a) mutual articulation of each organization's identity, b) mutual negotiation of the goal of partnership, c) actively creating opportunities for dialogue between partners
- Putting equal input in the planning, monitoring and evaluating of the program.

### Communication Channels used by Learning Alliance

Many types of channels are available and could be used by learning alliances. Ideally learning alliances will use more than one because different users have different needs and preferences. There are also possible resource constraints and facilitators will need to select only those are most effective for them. The basic communication channels are:

- Newsletters and briefing notes;
- Email, SMS, VOIP (one to one and within groups);
- Inter-and Intranet pages including websites;
- Collaborative workspace tools (Google groups, blogs, wiki, Facebook, etc.);
- Video and tele-conferences; and
- Face to face meetings.

## Networking

Networking is the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions. Networks are increasingly important, whether local, national or international. People talk about networks in development agencies, in research, in businesses and in many professional fields. In an era of intense knowledge-based globalization and technologically savvy people and organizations, the role of networks, alliances and partnerships is becoming highly visible. It is important for different actors to be linked together in a network so that the whole system benefits from these relationships, knowledge flows and learning from each other's experiences rather than reinventing the wheel and working in isolation. Networking is being recognized as a valuable means to share information, help in identifying and developing partnerships, and make the best use of our limited resources. To network is to contact different actors for the purpose of exchanging information and building professional relationships. It has the advantage of linking experts from different fields together. It gives access to new information and expert knowledge to those who can use it best.

Improved networking between researchers and advisors could increase the flow of knowledge and information to farmers about the latest developments and technological applications. Knowledge transfer can grow and improve if advisors are involved in defining research projects from the start, thus ensuring sufficient research in the socio-economic context of farmers. Foresight studies with multiple stakeholders, such as researchers, farmers, advisors and policy makers, can define groundbreaking research themes for the future that are not readily available for application in the field, but in line with expectations of multiple stakeholders.

Networks are best placed to play an advocacy role in agricultural extension and development. Some of the extension networks, such as Australasia-Pacific Extension Network Ltd (APEN) (<https://www.apen.org.au/>) and The African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS) (<http://www.afaas-africa.org/>), have been instrumental in triggering significant influence on the extension policies in the Australasia Pacific region and Africa, respectively. There are many established networks with specific areas of specialization. For example, these can be exclusive networks for livestock production or crop production. Each network is made up of different actors who are involved in research, innovation or production for one specific area of agriculture. These actors work together to expand the support base that is available to farmers for a specific part of the farming operation. These are viable forums for EAS to tap into together with the resources offered by such networks, or if possible, connect their farmers to these networks to get information on new technologies that might help in their development process.

A learning alliance is a type of network. A learning alliance produces a lot of information (tacit knowledge) products and requires suitable means of communication. ICT plays a more and important role in providing access and use of this information. One analogy for a network is the internet, a set of connected nodes that communicate. And like the internet, networks have their own vocabulary. Words like 'boundary spanners'; 'networkers'; 'lurkers'; 'champions'; and 'information hub'. A network facilitator needs a good understanding across a wide of areas and they need resources on network facilitation to support them.

### Competences for Network Facilitators

A network facilitator must be a 'Jack of all trades', able to communicate with all sorts of people and on all sorts of topics, and eager to learn new tricks. The basics are 'Collect' and 'Connect'; connecting people with people, people with resources and collections of people with possibilities and discussions; and collecting relevant and up-to-date information on the network in a shared space. A network facilitator must keep an eye on the flow of information and knowledge in the network, mold the context and proactively pursue opportunities. No blueprint is available, but plenty of resources and knowledge able people are around to learn from and with.

The ABC (Activities, Behaviour and Channels) for facilitators (DFID, 2004), captures nicely the activities, behaviours and skills needed to manage networks. Facilitating a learning alliance can be compared with cooking. The list below suggests important ingredients. But a facilitator should pick, choose and adapt from or add to the ABC list based on own experiences: because an effective blue print recipe doesn't exist.

### **Typical Activities of Network Facilitators**

The typical activities for a facilitator include:

- Managing the network's assets (Vision and Strategy);
- Maintaining a members list (Yellow Pages);
- Initiating distribution of information (Information management component);
- Organizing face to face events (Knowledge Sharing Component);
- Represent the network in other fora;
- Promote the network and its achievements;
- Introducing new members and match making between members;
- Networking with members to maintain energy;
- Ensuring feelings of inclusion-so that the members feel part of something;

### **Typical Behavior for a Network Facilitator**

Networks do not work when communication stops. A facilitator should have self-training to:

- Listen to traffic on the network;
- Support members' needs;
- Check that information is understood;
- Signaling the availability of resources and opportunities outside the network;
- Motivating cooperative behavior;
- Bridging differences between members of different realities and paradigms;
- Summarizing, drafting and publishing skills;
- Writing for the web and various target groups;
- Organizing informal meetings;
- Using appropriate facilitation skills in running face to face events (based on adult learning principles), using tele-and video conferencing, etc.
- Competencies to set up and use collaborative tools.

### **The Concept of Action Learning and Reflective Practitioners**

#### **Action Learning**

Action learning is a concept that promotes individual and organizational learning through small teams that address real problems and learn from their attempts to change things. The most important aspect of Action Learning is its ability to promote cultural change. It provides learning for individuals and the organization. The benefits of Action Learning come at two levels. At an individual level, people learn through doing. They learn about technical issues such as work cell design. They learn about team processes and how to function in teams. They also learn leadership and cooperation skills. Action Learning gives team members confidence in their abilities to learn while promoting an appropriate humility about their actual knowledge.

The action learning and reflective practices are the problem-solving process. Action learning is required when the extension agent want to solve a problem by actively trying different solutions. By evaluating the results and adjusting the problem-solving methods one can get best results.



Reflecting practice is used for continuous learning. The actions taken should be looked at the action taken in a critical way and how those actions can be improved.

### Reflection practice

Reflective practice as defined by Moon (1999), is “a set of abilities and skills, to indicate the taking of a critical stance, an orientation to problem solving or state of mind.” In essence, it is a readiness to constantly evaluate and review one’s practice in the light of new learning (which may arise from within the context of one’s professional practice). Critical reflection can be described as an attitude and a reasoning process involving many intellectual skills with rationality at its core. It also involves essentially subjective characteristics such as independence, courage, empathy, integrity and perseverance. It is a cognitive process and open perspective that involves a deliberate pause to examine beliefs, goals or practices in order to gain new or deeper understanding that leads to actions thus improving our practice and building up knowledge in our minds.

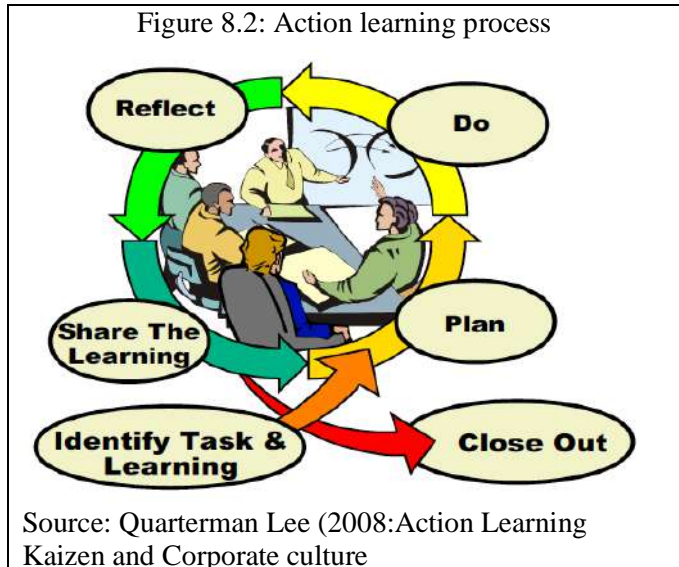
It is an in-depth conversation about what we do, how it works, and why we do, that it enables us to actively participate in community situations and experience. It is used to look back and to look forward. It is used to examine what happened during the doing, and then to use this to work out what to do next. In between these two elements, one builds theory-conscious understanding-from the experience:

- What happened?
- What is learned?
- How the learning can be used?

Reflecting on actual experience of work, regardless of the nature of these experiences, practitioners in the field can employ the tools of reflective practice and action learning as outlined above in conclusion, a useful cue or note card for extension agents in the field.

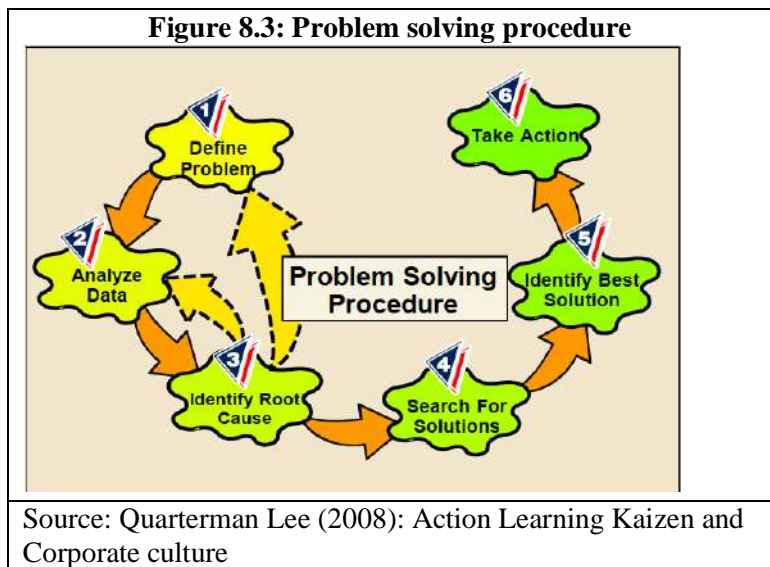
Reflective practice can be an important tool in practice-based professional learning settings where people learn from their own professional experiences, rather than from formal learning or knowledge transfer. It may be the most important source of personal professional development and improvement. It is also an important way to bring together theory and practice; through reflection a person is able to see and label forms of thought and theory within the context of his or her work.

Figure 8.2: Action learning process



Source: Quarterman Lee (2008): Action Learning Kaizen and Corporate culture

Figure 8.3: Problem solving procedure



Source: Quarterman Lee (2008): Action Learning Kaizen and Corporate culture

A person who reflects throughout his or her practice is not just looking back on past actions and events, but is taking a conscious look at emotions, experiences, actions, and responses, and using that information to add to his or her existing knowledge base and reach a higher level of understanding.

### Reflection Practitioner

A reflective practitioner is a person, employee or any individual who believe in learning constantly and updating his/her knowledge by reflecting on activities done by him/her in the past. From the above discussion it can be deducted that a reflective practitioner is someone who, at regular intervals, looks back at the work he did, and the work process, and considers how s/he can improve. Merickel (1998), defines reflection as knowing-in-action, and explains, “When the practitioner reflects-in-action in a case s/he perceives as unique, paying attention to phenomena and surfacing his intuitive understanding of them, his/her experimenting is a once exploratory, move testing, and hypothesis testing. The three functions are fulfilled by the very same actions”.

While implementing a program there arise several challenges. These may range from the designing part, planning, implementing of the design or even from execution. The best part is that even though cognitive, and organizational barriers plays and important role, it is reflecting upon the situation, which provides much greater insights, and understanding of the problem.

It is through reflection the practitioner utilizes a repertoire of understandings, images, and actions to reframe a troubling situation so that problem solving actions are generated. As a reflective practitioner, reflecting on one experience will allow development through critical thinking and analysing. When one reflects on experience with skeptical questioning and imaginative speculation, he can refine, deepen, or correct his knowledge constructions. Some strategies that can be formulated to develop my skills as a reflective/reflexive practitioner as postulated by (Roth 1989), are as follows:

- Questioning what, why, and how one does things and asking what, why, and how others do things
- Seeking alternatives
- Keeping an open mind
- Comparing and contrasting
- Seeking the framework, theoretical basis, and/or underlying rationale
- Viewing from various perspectives
- Asking “what if...?”
- Asking for others’ ideas and viewpoints
- Using prescriptive models only when adapted to the situation
- Considering consequences
- Hypothesizing
- Synthesizing and testing, and
- Seeking, identifying, and resolving problems.

### Concluding Remarks

As facilitator the extension agents should always remember that continuous learning is a fundamental ingredient of change and development. Building learning alliances that harmonise practices and approaches for facilitating change is important in pluralistic service provision. Networking has the advantage of linking experts from different fields together to provide knowledge about specific topics to those who need it. By constantly interweaving learning and reflection, Action Learning increases discernment and brings deeper understanding among the participants. People go beyond their pre-program assumptions and mental models. These increased abilities do not just affect the Action Learning group but they carry it to other parts of the organization and begin to influence the thinking and thinking abilities of many others. The quality of thinking, problem solving and decision-making rises throughout the organization, at many levels and in many diverse situations. The result is cultural change.

**Exercise 1:**

Answer the following questions in your own words.

1. What is meant by pluralistic service provision?

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.....  
.....  
.....

2. Choose the correct answer.

- 2.1 Why is networking important in AIS?

- a) Networking helps farmers work on their own.
- b) Different actors work together for the benefit of the system.
- c) Networks help the extensionist to be an expert in everything.
- d) Farmers have access to old information.

- 2.2 What is a learning alliance?

- a) A network of experts in a particular field.
- b) A group of farmers who work together with a common goal.
- c) A diverse group who commit to improving knowledge on a specific issue.
- d) A group of extensionists working with government.

**Practical activity 1.**

Think about how you can bring people together to exchange ideas with what you have available to you. Write down some of the ways you can get different actors together to network.

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## UNIT-4

## FACILITATING INNOVATION PLATFORMS

### Overview

Innovation Platforms (IPs) or multi-stakeholder alliances are an increasingly popular approach to enhance collaboration and innovation within AIS. Using IPs is a common approach to promote innovation for agricultural development. In delivering EAS services, it is important to visualize IPs and explain how they help to accelerate innovations. Multi-stakeholders' partnerships are an approach to bring together a diversity of skills and resources for more effective delivery of EAS. Advocacy and actions can also potentially make a bigger impact on policy-makers and government.

### Objectives

The core objectives of the study unit are to:

- Impart knowledge and expertise to the participants about innovation platforms (IPs);
- Introduce with core principles of establishing an Innovation platform;
- Describe briefly about objectives, key drivers, uses and functions of IPs;
- Present techniques of facilitation of IPs;
- Briefly describe on the multi-stakeholder engagement in EAS;

### Outcomes

After completion of the unit the participants will be:

- Able to know about IPs and enhance their knowledge on facilitating IPs;
- Explain why IPs are important in AIS; and
- Describe different models of IPs and multi-stakeholder engagements.

**Duration:** 4 hours and 30 minutes.





## SESSION-9: VISUALIZING AND FACILITATING INNOVATION PLATFORMS

### Session Overview

The session highlights the principles, objectives and uses of innovation platforms (IPs) including its functions, activities and factors contribute to the success of IPs. The session also describes benefits of using IPs and facilitation processes.

### Session Objectives

The main objectives of the session are to:

- iv) Introduce participants with innovation platforms and its importance in EAS.
- v) Provide basic information on the functions, activities and benefits of Using IPs.
- vi) Enhance participants' knowledge and skills on facilitating of IPs in AIS.

### Session Outcomes

After completing of this session, you should be able to:

- Understand on IPs;
- Explain why IPs are important in extension advisory services;
- Describe briefly about objectives, key drivers, uses and functions of IPs, and
- Facilitate innovation platforms in agricultural innovation systems.

### Introduction

Innovation platforms (IPs) are defined as “Networks of diverse stakeholders, who cooperate, interact to develop a shared vision and identify solutions to a common problem as a group or individual members” (Nederlof et al., 2011). It comprises stakeholders and/or collaborators of diverse social and economic actors and the institutions that govern their behavior, all working towards a common objective. In principle, the platform considers innovation as a dynamic systemic process and recognizes that innovation can emerge from many sources, complex interactions, and knowledge flows. An innovation platform (IP) is a space for learning and change. It is a group of individuals (who often represent organizations) with different backgrounds and interests: farmers, traders, food processors, researchers, government officials etc. The members come together to diagnose problems, identify opportunities and find ways to achieve their goals. They may design and implement activities as a platform, or coordinate activities by individual members.

Facilitation of innovation is a flexible and adaptive process during which facilitator(s) manage dialogue and stimulate collective problem analysis by multiple stakeholders to overcome challenges or make use of opportunities (Rooyen, et.al, 2013). Innovation platforms operate in changing environments, and they aim to promote change.

Recent studies reveal that IPs are perceived as governance mechanisms for enhancing multi-stakeholder interaction and learning, capacity development and coordination and community linkages (Kilelu et al., 2013; Cullen. et. al, 2014).

Their functioning however depends on their organization, stakeholder representation, facilitation and institutional embedding capacity (Nederlof et. al, 2011; Boorgard et. al, 2013). Steps in the formation of viable-stakeholder platforms include; consultation and scoping, visioning and stakeholder analysis, adaptive planning and developing action plans (Hall, 2007; Brouwer et. al, 2015). agricultural innovation platform (IP) is a forum where a group of actors with different backgrounds and interests, including women and men farmers, extension, research, private sector, local and or national decision-makers come together to diagnose challenges and opportunities, and to find solutions in a particular situation (Homaan-Kee Tui et. al, 2013). Together they identify leverage points for technical, institutional and organizational innovations and find ways to achieve their goals. IPs may facilitate knowledge exchange, initiate collective action in planning and implementation, and coordinate activities of their various members (Victor et. al, 2013). Ideally they engage actors at multiple scales and catchments areas and evolve into larger networks for learning and change (Tucker et. al, 2013).

## Innovation Platforms and Agricultural Development

Agriculture in the developing countries including Bangladesh is confronted with a real problem of productivity. The levels of agricultural productivity in the country, related to both soil and labour are still well below those of other developing countries of the regions. The farmers therefore need to intensify their production systems and adapt to ongoing change in their production environment, which presupposes continuous innovation.

Understanding the emergence of innovation systems is at the heart of research analyzing technological change (Hekkert and Negro, 2009). Innovation platforms (IPs) have been widely used as a tool to encourage agricultural innovation (Nederlof and Pyburn, 2012). IPs are equitable and dynamic spaces designed to bring together heterogeneous stakeholders to share their knowledge and find solutions to a common problem (ILRI, 2012). These heterogeneous stakeholders are more easily able to identify the innovations adapted to a given context than homogenous groups' agricultural cooperatives which only include a single type of stakeholders.

The various promoters of agriculture in developing countries are continually seeking mechanisms to increase agricultural productivity through improved stakeholder organization. In the past, introduction of agricultural research was long dominated by a top-down approach in which all the research operations were first performed in experimental stations (Wey et. al, 2010), and then transferred to the peasant context for adaptation, validation and dissemination (Lefort, 1988).

The various promoters of agriculture in developing countries are continually seeking mechanisms to increase agricultural productivity through improved stakeholder organization. In the past, introduction of

### Box 9.1: Some important tips for facilitators -2

**Visualization:** is forming an image in your mind of something that you want to achieve and how you want to achieve it (Ngwenya & Kibwika 2016).

**Innovation:** is the process by which individuals or organizations master and implement the design and production of goods and services that are new to them, irrespective of whether they are new to their competitors, their country, or the world.

**Innovation Platform:** An innovation platform is a space for learning and change. It is a group of individuals (who often represent organizations) with different backgrounds and interests: farmers, traders, food processors, researchers, government officials etc. The members come together to diagnose problems, identify opportunities and find ways to achieve their goals. They may design and implement activities as a platform, or coordinate activities by individual members (CGIAR, 2013)

**Agricultural Innovation Platform:** An agricultural innovation platform (IP) is a forum where a group of actors with different backgrounds and interests, including women and men farmers, extension, research, private sector, local and or national decision-makers come together to diagnose challenges and opportunities and to find solutions in a particular situation (Homann Kee Tui et al., 2013).



agricultural research was long dominated by a top-down approach in which all the research operations were first performed in experimental stations (Wey et. al, 2010), and then transferred to the peasant context for adaptation, validation and dissemination (Lefort, 1988). This approach precluded an optimum exchange between the researchers and the end users of the tools: extension officers, producers, etc. (Dabiré et. al, 2012). Today, development partners are more aware of the importance of participative approaches, such as mechanisms contributing to boosting agricultural productivity. IP is one of these approaches (Cadilhon et.al, 2013).

In agriculture, innovation often involves a combination of these different types of changes. For example: a new way of diverting water to fields requires that the farmers organize themselves in water use associations, which must in turn be supported by the local authorities. Innovation is stimulated when multiple actors (farmers, NGOs, service providers, traders, agro-dealers, researchers, policy makers) interact and share their ideas, knowledge and opinions to come up with new solutions. Innovation platforms can be used by advisory services and other actors as a means to bring different actors together to discuss and negotiate collective or coordinated action (Annet et.al, 2014). IPs facilitate interaction and collaboration within and between networks of farmers, governmental and non-governmental service providers, policymakers, researchers, private sector players, and other stakeholders in the agricultural system (Schut et al., 2016).

The members come together to develop a common vision and find ways to achieve their goals. They may design and implement activities as a group or coordinate activities by individual members. Individual members can also innovate alone, spurred by the coordinated group activities. Innovation platforms may tackle challenges and opportunities at various levels: in a village or community, in a district or nationwide, or throughout a value chain or economic sector. They may work at a single level, or across several levels. Innovation platforms are particularly useful in agriculture because agricultural issues tend to be complex. They involve different biophysical, socioeconomic and political factors, and concern various formal and informal institutions. By bringing together stakeholders in various sectors and from different levels, innovation platforms may be able to identify and address common concerns more effectively that can be used to explore strategies which can boost productivity, manage natural resources, improve value chains, and adapt to climate change. Some innovation platforms focus on single issues; others deal with multiple topics.

## IPs in Agricultural Value Chains and Food Systems

Agricultural innovation systems' thinking has been adopted in agricultural research and development to harness the actor innovative capabilities, knowledge enhancement and social transformation. Hence there is growing recognition of the viability of Innovation platforms (IPs) as an approach to stimulating development of agricultural enterprises due to their emphasis on value chain development, networking

### Box 9.2: Types of Innovations

- Technological innovation
- Institutional innovation
- Market innovation, and
- Policy innovation.

and partnerships. However, despite the key role of the formation process in realization of desired outcomes, there is insufficient knowledge on how to form vibrant agricultural innovation platforms under diverse contexts (Magalai et al., (2018). Farmers, agri-business and service providers have to innovate continuously to adapt to an ever-changing environment (including markets, climate and resources). Innovation is about putting ideas that are new to a certain location into

practice, and in this way changing the situation of those living in this area for the better. These “ideas” can be a new way of irrigating a field (i.e. a technology), a new way of organizing women farmers to bulk their produce (i.e. an organizational innovation), or a new policy that supports smallholders in getting bank loans (i.e. an institutional innovation).

Traditional approaches to agricultural development tend to emphasize food security- helping farmers to grow enough to feed themselves and their families, and perhaps a surplus to sell. More recently, concern with markets has become prominent. Even subsistence farmers need cash, goes the reasoning; they need to be able to grow things they can sell. And if they have a market for their produce, they have an incentive to grow more to earn more. This ushers in a virtuous cycle of higher yields and production, greater incomes, higher living standards, and more investment in production. But linking farmers with markets is a complex issue and needs physical infrastructure for storage and processing facilities, marketplaces, roads, electricity and communication facilities. Farmers may need to learn which crops, fishes or livestock to produce, and to adopt new production techniques so they can produce the quality and quantity required at the right time. They may need to invest in costly machineries, modern irrigation systems and inputs (seeds and fertilizer). They may need to get organized in groups so they can sell in bulk and negotiate better prices. They need links with potential buyers, information about prices and standards, and sources of credit. They may face resistance from traders who fear a loss of power and profits. Many government programs and projects aim to overcome these difficulties. In Bangladesh, some donor assisted projects such as, NCDP, NATP, SCDP, USAID AVC project and FAO Food Safety Programme etc.

In agricultural development, value chains are increasingly being used as conceptual and operational frameworks to help identify entry points to support resource-poor actors in the production, processing and marketing of their agricultural products. Value chains are relationships where actors are linked in production, processing and distribution to make available a final product for consumption. Value chain structures are important because they help system actors (including the poor) exploit markets through specialization, comparative and competitive advantage, economies of scale as well as dynamic technological, organizational and institutional changes. The objective of innovation in value chains development is to make (agricultural) markets more efficient by exploring solutions to overcome fragmented marketing relations; improve access to services, information and inputs; and balance asymmetric distribution of information and power (Methu et.al,2013).

#### **Box 9.3: Coordinating an innovation platform**

- Make sure platform members feel part of planning, implementation and discussion of achievements;
- Hold regular meetings, reporting activities;
- Keep it simple and pragmatic;
- Circulate information through e-mail/ text messages;
- Organize joint field days to see what other platform members are doing. *Source: GFRAS, 2014.*

Value chain interventions go one stage further. Rather than looking at just the relationship between farmers and buyers, they consider the whole value chain from producers to consumers. They consider each step in the chain as well as all the various chain supporters. They also consider the chain context: regulations, overall economy etc. IPs and value chains offer a practical way to deal with the complex issues and multiple stakeholders involved in value chains. They bring together a range of stakeholders: farmers, traders, processors, input suppliers, credit suppliers, market information providers, insurance services, policymakers, extensionists and researchers. Together, these stakeholders design solutions to problems along the value chain (Birachi et.al, 2013).

Innovation platforms for value chains are not suitable in that because many of their members come from the private sector that looks for profits. If the platform cannot provide profits, they will lose interest. On the other hand, if these partnerships can provide profits, they should last longer than the duration of the project. Another unsuitable issue is that platform members may compete with each other. If members of such platforms cannot find benefit of profits by cooperating and sharing information it makes the platform harder.

An open agenda and skillful facilitation are needed. The facilitator must be neutral and help members realize that a more efficient value chain benefits all by providing greater volumes, better standards, higher efficiency, lower costs and less waste.

Farmers can benefit from such platforms by learning about market demand and requirements, changing what they produce and how they produce it. They can organize into groups to bulk their produce and negotiate better prices. They learn marketing skills and the importance of trust and long-term trading relationships. They may get services such as credit and improved production technologies via the platform. Production systems become more profitable. Traders and processors can benefit by getting a larger, more reliable, better quality supply of inputs. They may welcome farmers getting organized as this reduces their transaction costs. Service providers such as input suppliers, credit organizations and business services gain clients for their products and services.

Research and development organizations may use innovation platforms to engage market actors and to study and improve market and value chains. Platform members may engage in many initiatives, including new crops, introducing grades and standards, collective action to get inputs and credit, bulking produce for sale, market research, introducing new market institutions (such as fish or livestock auctions), improving product quality and giving training. Members can develop some of these initiatives themselves; for others, they need support from institutions such as research, the government or business consultants (Birachi et.al. (2013).

## Principles of IPs

Innovation platforms are made up of various actors who communicate, co-operate and share tasks to carry out activities needed for innovation to take place (Nederlof et. al, 2011). There are a few principles that are important:

- Diverse composition of stakeholders.
- Address a shared problem or opportunity, not the agenda of one or two members only.
- Facilitation by a neutral person/organization with convening authority.
- Initial success motivates the members to commit to the platform.
- Change resulting from the innovation should benefit multiple members.
- Exchange and learning should remain central.
- Platform members must show respect to each other despite of diverging opinions and knowledge, and
- Systems for ensuring transparency and accountability must be in place.

Platforms can exist at multiple levels. Local platforms, for example, tend to address specific problems or opportunities such as improving the efficiency of a specific value chain. Local platforms are well placed to test new ideas and generate action on the ground. Platforms at national or regional levels often set the agenda for agricultural development, and allow stakeholders; including farmers through their representatives, to influence policies (case 1). Linking platforms at different levels offer several benefits such as: sharing successful ideas, empowering local actors to influence policy, fostering dialogue in policy making, developing value chains, and increasing legitimacy and learning.

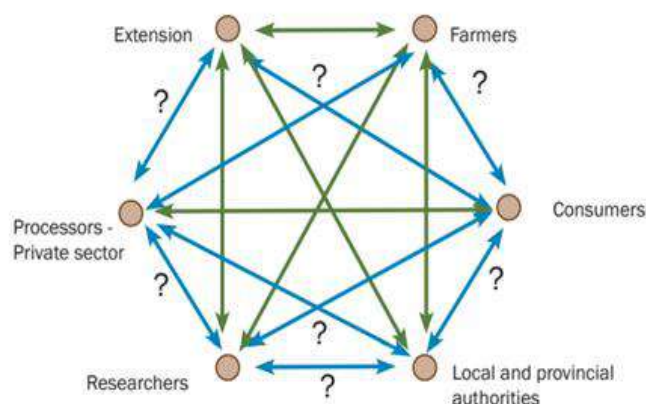


Figure 9.1. Members and interactions at an IP (ILRI 2015).

Innovation Platforms (IPs) are a popular approach to enhance collaboration and innovation within AIS. Innovation platforms are ways to bring together different stakeholders to identify solutions to common problems or to achieve common goals. They ensure that different interests are taken into account, and various groups contribute to finding solutions. Generally, an IP is a mechanism to enhance communication and innovation capacity among mutually dependent actors, by improving interactions, coordination, and coherence among all actors to facilitate learning and contribute to production and use of knowledge. It is anticipated that bringing different type of actors from the innovation system together for sharing experiences, knowledge, skills, ideas and resources contributes to economic gains through improved productivity and services by creating an enabling environment (i.e. supportive institutions).

### Example of Innovation Platform in Bangladesh

#### Case 9.1. Capacity development for agricultural innovation system

The Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems (CDAIS) project funded by the European Union is a global partnership between *Agrinatura*, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN and eight pilot countries of the world including Bangladesh that aims to strengthen the capacity of countries and key stakeholders to innovate in complex agricultural systems, thereby improving rural livelihoods. CDAIS recognizes that agricultural innovation is a process that is most successful if its actors have the functional capacities to cope with complexity, to collaborate, to reflect and learn and to engage in strategic and political processes (see FAO 2016). It brought together key partners and actors of eight countries including Bangladesh to address commonly identified challenges and opportunities in specific regions or within particular value chains. CDAIS innovation platform in Bangladesh operated in value chains (fisheries, fruits and vegetables) and operates at two levels within each country: the national agricultural innovation system (AIS) level and at local level, in agricultural innovation niche partnerships. At each of these two levels – also called the ‘dual pathway’ (FAO, 2016) – it intervenes in three dimensions: individual, organizational and national levels.

The National Innovation Facilitators (NIF) for each value chain facilitated s periodic meetings of the actors in the innovation niche partnership and to identify challenges and the strategic actions required to overcome them and ensured that all members can express their views and helps the actors in the partnership find common ground for action. They provided safeguards the overall process for actors of the partnership by fostering relationships, coordinating interactions, facilitating negotiations and guiding collective learning.

The NIF built relationships through brokering with other relevant actors and invited them to collaborate with the niche partnership, provided technical support and linked the niche partnership to other actors that can provide relevant information, knowledge needs of the innovation niche partnership and advocacy support for innovation niche partnership for policy change, generate new business models or stimulate new relationships among stakeholders etc. Source: Agrinatura and FAO, 2019.

### Core Principles of Establishing an Innovation Platform

Innovation platforms are inherently inclusive; they comprise different actors and research partners bound together by their individual interests in a shared issue, e.g. aiming at improving livelihoods, enterprises, natural resource base, social relations and/or other interests. The main objective of the IPs is to provide a forum for different actors with a common vision to diagnose problems and generate solutions to them (Van Rooyen and Homann, 2009). In IPs through dialogue, stakeholders in a value chain identify options for addressing opportunities and challenges at various stages of the chain and this in turn helps to improve the performance of the entire chain. Membership and linkages are flexible, different members have different roles and ways to participate. Some linkages already exist among the different groups e.g. research with private sector. This is important because:

- a) The actors can learn from each other regarding challenges and potential solutions;
- b) They can exchange experiences; and
- c) Complex challenges we often face need a wider group to resolve.



## Key Drivers of an Innovation Platform

Innovation platform is a tool for managing the multi-stakeholder process in value chains. IP uses a participatory approaches and collective action tools such as, participatory development approach and management, participatory research and extension approach, participatory varietal selection, participatory gender user analysis, participatory learning and action research, participatory agro-ecosystem management, farmer field schools, and demonstration plots despite the limited participatory opportunities it presents:

- a) Participatory approaches and collective action tools such as participatory research and extension approaches, participatory development management, varietal selection, gender user analysis, learning and action research, agro-ecosystem management, farmer field schools, and demonstration plots.
- b) Dissemination pathways that include farmer-to-farmer learning, farmer collective action, market led technology adoption, and participatory market chain approach.
- c) Functional learning through systemic joint analysis, documentation, and experiential learning and information/knowledge sharing among platform actors.

### Box 9.4: Innovation platform is an enabler

This enables collective action by linking the technical and functional capacities of the individuals and organizations involved with the institutional environment, thus changing the patterns of interaction needed to support technological innovation (Kilelu et. al., 2013).

This enhances the systemic capacity to innovate by aligning the knowledge and capacities that are scattered across diverse actors in different dimensions.

(ibid.). [www.tandfonline.com/loi/raee20](http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/raee20)

## Factors Contributing to the success of innovation platforms

The success of an innovation platform depends largely on the harmonious interaction between several factors; the most important factors include:

- Farmers and or entrepreneurs at the center of the IP and with whom consensus is achieved;
- Measurable quantitative or qualitative power relations and interest of IP stakeholders;
- Trust, confidence and understanding among stakeholders of the IP;
- Good leadership and facilitation skills by the IP stakeholders and the facilitating institution and focal person(s);
- Facilitating and managing perceptions, competing interests, risks, availability and access to resources, and lack of incentives among the diverse social and economic interests of stakeholders of the IP;
- Equity and timely access to resources, buy-in, commitment and ownership by downstream IP stakeholders;
- Time and availability of individuals and groups, especially the private sector;
- Catalysts and or Champions of change;
- Participatory and or collective action approaches and use of learning tools;
- Dissemination pathways in particular, market-led pathways;
- Reliable information communication, and networking and learning skills by stakeholders of the IP; and
- Functional learning through joint analysis, documentation, and learning and sharing of best practices.

### Case 9.2: Innovation platforms bring changes in agricultural value chains

Innovation platforms and associated interactions among diverse stakeholders have led to changes for small-scale farmers of Bangladesh. Managing and facilitating the process over time under the support from CDAIS helped achieve impact.

Initially, the platform in Bangladesh identified production and marketing challenges of crops (mango and Pineapple) and fisheries. Once it was identified that the most limiting factor was market access, the platform involved other stakeholders (buyers, transporters and auctioneers) and local government structures mandated with marketing. Once the local markets were developed, the focus of the platform shifted towards the processors and the input site, linking farmers to feed suppliers. This illustrates how the agenda and composition of the IP evolved over time to benefit stakeholders in increase of income and livelihoods (Agrinatura and FAO, 2019).



### Box 9.5: Examples of innovation platforms

1. The Consortium for Sustainable Development of the Andean Eco region ([www.condesan.org](http://www.condesan.org)) uses innovation platforms to address issues in natural resource management. They engage local actors to discuss how to share benefits and resolve conflicts. In the Fodder Adoption Project, the International Livestock Research Institute ([fodderadoption.wordpress.com/](http://fodderadoption.wordpress.com/)) used innovation platforms in Ethiopia to improve livestock feeding. Through platform discussions, the project's initial narrow focus on feed broadened to include the procurement of improved crossbred cows, new milk transportation arrangements, and the establishment of a dairy cooperative. Innovation platforms are also used in several other projects notably the Nile Basin Development Challenge (<http://nilebdc.org>), and the imGoats (<http://imgoats.org>) and PROGEBE (<http://cgspace.cgiar.org/handle/10568/27871>) projects.
2. In Southern Africa, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics ([www.icrisat.org](http://www.icrisat.org)) used innovation platforms to improve the production and marketing of goats. Innovation platforms helped lower transaction costs in the value chain, meant that farmers could make a bigger profit, and ensured that the market could guide investment in goat production.
3. The Convergence of Science–Strengthening Innovation Systems program ([www.cos-sis.org](http://www.cos-sis.org)) used innovation platforms in West Africa to improve smallholder agriculture. The platforms studied bottlenecks in production systems and induced institutional changes in value chains and policymaking.
4. The International Center for Tropical Agriculture and its partners ([www.alanzasdeaprendizaje.org](http://www.alanzasdeaprendizaje.org)) developed a regional 'learning alliance' in Central America to improve market access for farmers through collaborative innovation. The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa ([www.fara-africa.org](http://www.fara-africa.org)) promotes the use of innovation platforms in integrated agricultural research for development programs that target productivity, markets, natural resource management and policy issues. *Source: [ilri.org/taxonomy](http://ilri.org/taxonomy)*

## Uses of Innovation Platforms

Various types of organizations use innovation platforms:

- Agricultural research organizations use innovation platforms to help make their research more relevant and to facilitate the adaptation and dissemination of findings (Lema and Marc. 2013).
- Development agencies and NGOs find them useful to identify areas for interventions, to ensure that the interventions are appropriate for particular situations, and to enable stakeholders to influence policy making and development activities (Duncan et.al, 2013). They may sponsor innovation platforms.
- Local and national governments use them to improve policy making, links with clients, and their outreach services for citizens (Cadilhon et.al, 2013).

The private sector, including traders, input suppliers, service providers, processors, wholesalers and retailers, can benefit from innovation platforms that aim to boost economic activities and make value chains more profitable. Some stakeholders are crucial members of innovation platforms:

- Farmers and other rural people use innovation groups to express their interests and guide activities that are intended to benefit them.
- The private sector, including traders, input suppliers, service providers, processors, wholesalers and retailers, can benefit from innovation platforms that aim to boost economic activities and make value chains more profitable.



## How Innovation Platforms Work

Generally, Innovation platforms follow three phases comprising seven-steps cycle stated below:

**Phase 1:** Situation analysis (Step 1 to 3): Actor networking, IP establishment, feedback from baseline surveys, prioritization of bottlenecks and opportunities.

**Phase 2:** Participatory evaluation (Step 4 and 5): Screening and testing of alternative technical, institutional and policy options, building capacities in the process, make the changes happen

**Phase 3:** Develop innovations (Step 6 and 7): New strategies for partnerships, improved technologies, management and marketing, learning and feedback loops.

**Step 1: Initiate.** Any stakeholder group can initiate innovation platforms, but it is usually a research or development organization, a government agency or an NGO that does so. This organization identifies the broad focus area of the innovation platform, identifies the various stakeholders, brings them together, and convenes the first few meetings. It identifies someone to facilitate the innovation platform: perhaps one of its own staff, or someone else from outside.

**Step 2: Decide on focus.** The platform members discuss among themselves on the focus area and identify bottlenecks, problems and opportunities. Often refine the focus further, expand it, or shift it to a different set of issues. They gather information from various sources, including research findings, current practices, and local knowledge and policy guidelines.

**Step 3: Identify options.** The platform members find the possible ways to solve their problems or take advantage of the opportunities that they have identified. The range of options may be wide. For example, they may decide to test new varieties of a crop, explore ways to improve supplies of inputs, promote the marketing of a product, or press for a change in government policy etc.

**Step 4: Test and refine solutions.** Solutions must be tested and adapted to make sure they work. Farmers may test new farming methods; traders may try offering more for higher grades of produce; an input supplier may market-test a new type of product. The innovation may be a new technology (a new type of seed or farming technique), or an institutional change (a policy adjustment or a new way to manage marketing). The innovation platform coordinates these experiments and monitors whether they are successful.

**Step 5: Develop capacity.** In most cases, it is necessary to develop the capacity of different actors in order for the solutions to succeed. Farmers may need training in a new technique; cooperatives may need help with organization and bookkeeping; new ways may be needed to multiply and distribute seed or to manage the marketing of produce. The innovation platform identifies these needs and finds ways to develop the capacity required.

**Step 6: Implement and scale up.** If the innovation is successful, the innovation platform works with its member groups to get it adopted widely. That may mean documenting and publicizing the innovation, arranging training and study visits, persuading other groups to adopt it etc.

**Step 7: Analyze and learn.** Learning what has succeeded and what has not is an important part of innovation platforms, especially those with a research focus. This information is fed back to platform members so they can identify further changes to be made (Figure 6).



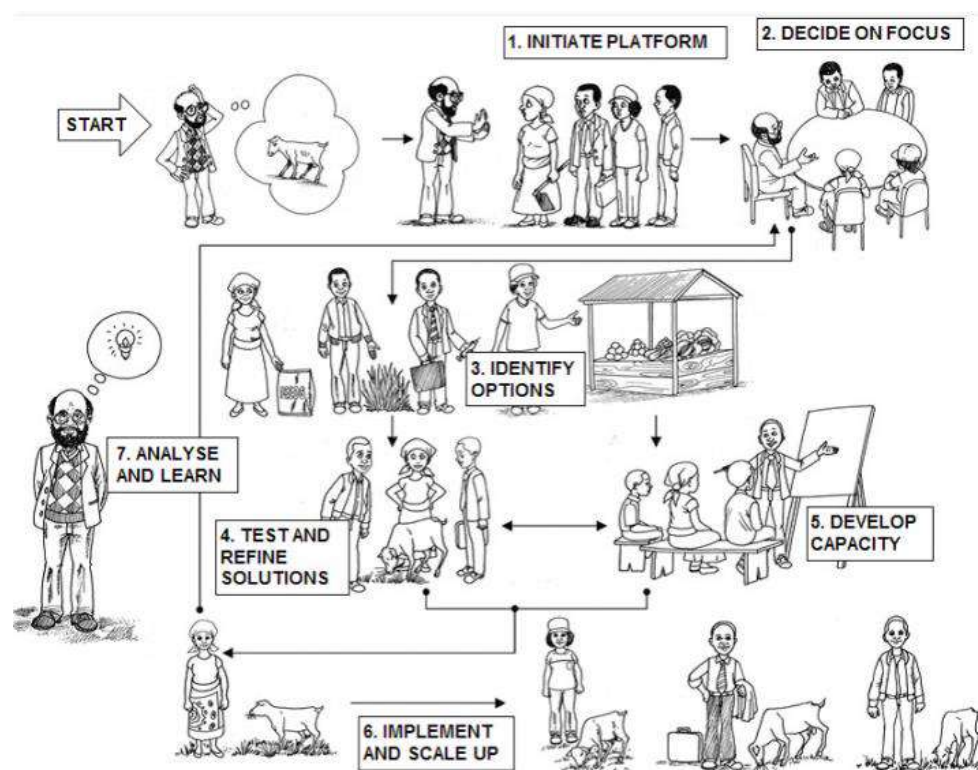


Figure 9.2. IPs tends to follow a 7 steps cycle (Homann-Kee Tui et. al, 2013).

## Functions and Activities of Innovation Platforms

In an effort to create space for learning, action and change, innovation platforms can fulfill a collated range of functions and related activities in AIS (Table 1). Innovation platforms do not necessarily fulfill all of these functions and activities. Depending on the composition of the innovation platform, as well as its specific objectives, specific functions and activities may be more or less relevant (Klijn and Teisman, 2003; Lamers et. al, 2017). Furthermore, the functions and activities outlined can be undertaken in various orders, either sequentially or parallel to one another.

**Table 9.1. Innovation platform functions and activities**

Innovation platform functions	Description of activities to fulfill the functions
Knowledge generation and brokering	Experimentation, learning, knowledge development and exchange as central elements of innovation, with better integration and synergies among technical, organizational and institutional options.
Facilitation of multi-directional information flows	Exchange of information and views of those concerned through networks, allowing information to spread. Identifying and linking different actors, stimulating new actor relationships.
Creation of, or an increase in, momentum for change	Generating solutions in context, on the basis of shared expectations and vision, creates buy-in and unity among innovation platform members and legitimacy for the innovations being generated. It motivates collective action to develop and test innovations in a real-world context.

Innovation platform functions	Description of activities to fulfill the functions
Guidance of research, policy and investment priorities	Prioritization of challenges and innovation options based on preferences or expectations of informed stakeholders, for targeted resource allocation. Challenges and options can include access to information, technologies, finance or institutional gaps.
Market formation	Facilitation of (niche) market creation, in marginal areas, post-conflict zones, illustrating market opportunities, creating trust in market agents, transportation of produce to faraway markets.
Capacity development and building entrepreneurial skills	Creation of business opportunities by deploying new technologies, markets, learning and networking. Developing the system's inherent capacity to learn, self-organize and innovate, incubating new organizational forms, nurturing its members' skills (entrepreneurship, representation, coordination and communication).
Policy development and advocacy	Institutional support: facilitating and lobbying for institutional change (for example, policy innovation and new business models).
Resources mobilization	Assembly of diverse resources (e.g. financial, human, social and physical resources) required to leverage change.

(Hekkert *et. al.*, 2007; Kilelu *et al.*, 2011).

## Benefits of Innovation Platforms

Strengths of innovation platforms include the followings:

- Facilitate dialogue and understanding among stakeholders and provide a space for them to create a common vision and mutual trust. They offer a neutral space to air disagreements and conflicts, and for members to state their needs and requirements;
- Enable partners to identify the bottlenecks hindering innovation, and develop solutions beyond what individual actors can achieve alone, for example, in infrastructure, institutional change and policy development;
- Create motivation and a feeling of ownership of the solutions that they develop: People readily buy into solutions they have been involved in developing;
- Facilitate upward communication- They enable weaker actors (such as small-scale farmers) to express their views on an equal basis with powerful actors (such as processors or the government). They empower communities to demand and negotiate for services from the government and support organizations;
- Lead to better-informed decisions- Innovation platforms enable joint learning and cooperation among diverse actors to solve problems and reduce uncertainties. Farmers can learn how to sell their products; policymakers gain evidence to use in creating a more enabling environment where innovations can happen;

- Contribute to capacity development. By improving communication, learning and exposure to new people and ideas, innovation platforms help members to clarify their roles, organize themselves, and adapt to unforeseen changes and new opportunities;
- Make innovative research possible. Innovation platforms create opportunities for research to be demand-driven, to find critical issues for investigation, and to disseminate research outputs. Platform members are involved in the research process, and are more likely to be convinced by the findings;
- Enhance Impact-Farmers can improve their agricultural productivity and profitability and improve how they manage natural resources. Value chain actors can engage more effectively in the market. Policy making can be more participatory and appropriate for solving issues on the ground (Homann-Kee Tui, 2013).

## Facilitation of Innovation Platforms

Facilitation of Innovation is a flexible and adaptive process during which facilitator(s) manage dialogue and stimulate collective problem analysis by multiple stakeholders to overcome challenges or make use of opportunities. Usually, the stakeholders of multiple groups do not want to cooperate or share information. They may have divergent interests, or even compete with each other. Skillful facilitation is needed so they agree on common goals and activities.

IPs often go through a cycle that includes initiation, deciding on a focus, identifying options, testing and refining solutions, developing capacity, implementing and scaling up, and analyzing to learn. Platform members need to be guided through each of the steps that requires a range of skills, some interpersonal and others more technical in nature (Rooyen et.al, 2013).

Dealing with everyone's interest is important to ensure that the platform focuses on the interest of its stakeholders. The stakeholders need to understand how their individual roles contribute for all and that collective action towards common goals benefits all.

Increasing communications among the stakeholders is vital issue by fostering trust and mutual respect between the actors in developing and strengthening relationships. IPs works in changing environments with the aim of promoting change. Flexibility is important to adjust objectives and activities to make changes. The stakeholders need to be aware of this and understand the process. It is the task of facilitator to make them understand the matter.

Stakeholders in an IP may initially not cooperate or share information - perhaps because they have never done so before. They may lack trust and confidence about the benefits from new ways of working together. Facilitation is critical for the success of an IP, change does not happen naturally. The importance of skilled facilitation is however often underestimated. At an IP it is not about facilitating meetings and dynamics between actors. It is about knowledge brokering among actors with different interests, stimulating their collective analysis and action, in order to overcome particular challenges that have held them back or to encourage them making use of opportunities (Van Rooyen *et. al.*, 2013). In addition, IPs operates in changing environments, and they aim to promote change.

### Box 9.6: Tasks of IP facilitation

- Help identify issues
- Manage meetings
- Support activities outside meetings
- Manage communication
- Deal with conflict and power
- Monitor, document and report
- Facilitate and advocate institutional change.
- Develop capacities.

Flexibility is therefore important throughout the IP process, in developing and adjusting objectives and activities that bring about desirable changes. Dealing with change and not losing direction is a critical task. A framework for multi-stakeholder innovation platform processes is presented below (Figure 9.3).

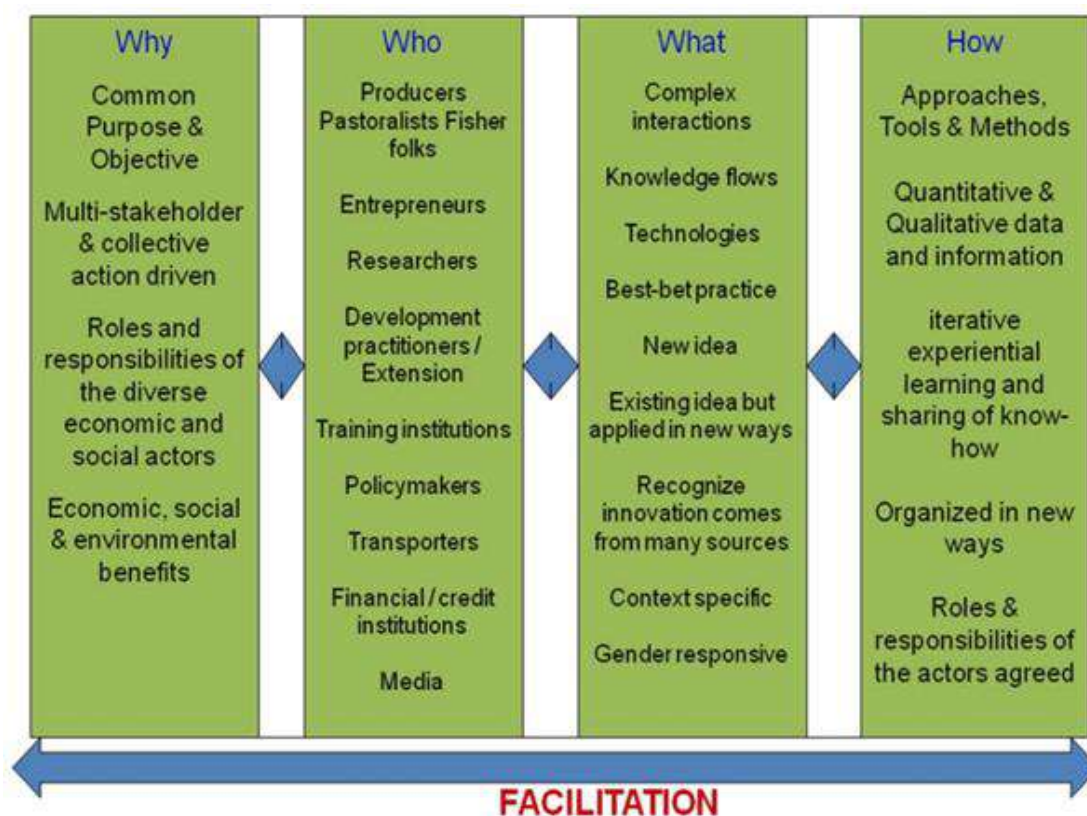


Figure 9.3. Framework for multi-stakeholder innovation platform processes  
(Adopted from IAR4D multi-stakeholder Innovation Platform (IP) processes.  
[www.coraf.org/publication](http://www.coraf.org/publication))

### Objectives of Facilitating Innovation Platforms

Developing individual and organizational capacities so as to be able to deal with dynamic challenges and opportunities, the following issues are important;

- Catalyzing self-organization and empowerment to enable articulation of needs;
- Developing and spreading technical and social innovations in a process of joint learning;
- Linking individuals and organizations to external service providers, market sources of innovation in order to create functional innovation systems.

For facilitation of the site level and (sub)-national IPs, it is important to ensure the following principles.

- 1. Building on existing structures and activities** - Assess to what extent existing activities and forums at the local level can be used as a starting point for the site level IPs. It is also worth considering to what extent the mandates of (sub)-national technical committees can be expanded to function as a starting point for (sub)-national IPs.
- 2. A participatory approach and local ownership** - Local ownership is one of the main factors that should determine the success and sustainability of site-level and (sub)- national level IPs. Although project staff at site and national levels may have to take a leading role in the formation and facilitation of the IPs, the work plans and activities have to be developed together with other actors of the platforms and opportunities for transferring ownership in time should be explored.



### Case-9.3: Innovation facilitation created impact on livelihood

The Second Crop Diversification Project (SCDP) as a “follow on” project of the Northwest Crop Diversification Project (NCDP) funded by the Government of Bangladesh and Asian Development Bank (ADB) implemented by the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) during 2012-2017 that fostered commercialization of agriculture through interventions to promote diversification into high-value crops (HVCs) and value addition, gender mainstreaming, and climate change adaptation. The project interventions increased rural income in 27 districts (52 sub-districts) of the Southwest and Northwest of Bangladesh through improving efficiency and value addition of high value crops (HVCs). The direct beneficiaries were marginal, small, medium and landless farmers.

The Micro Financing Institute, BRAC extended services for group mobilization, awareness raising, assisted in organizing training and extending credit support and engaged to form and validate small farmers' groups (SFG) and to provide credit support for the interested SFG members. DAE in close collaboration with BRAC adopted an interlinked approach through selection of farmers, group formation, awareness raising, introducing savings scheme, imparting trainings, field demonstrations, credit support, production of HVCs and marketing of products by the SFG members by formation of Farmers Marketing Group (FMG) taking representatives from SFGs. SCDP facilitation of transfer of technologies, credit supports, demonstrations and capacity building resulted the following success:

- Increased HVC production and commercialization.
- Reduced HVC postharvest losses, improved product quality and value addition, and enhanced market efficiency.
- Enhanced capacity of public sector institutions and participating partners in supporting farmers to increase their incomes.
- Increased employment of rural poor (men and women), and
- Increased participation of women in commercial agricultural activities.

*Source: SCDP, Annual Report, 2017.*

3. **Building capacity for facilitating IP formation and functioning-** Forming and facilitating the IPs requires intensive and skilled facilitation and brokering by the process facilitators, and involves training and personal coaching. In addition, periodical reflection and learning meetings have to be organized between project staff to learn from experiences and guide further actions.
4. **Monitoring and evaluation of IPs -** Monitoring and evaluation of IPs is a crucial element of the IP implementation process. It is critical to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of IPs as mechanisms to achieve the intended outcomes of the project and learn which strategies work and which do not.

A good IP facilitator supports stakeholders to start working as self-organized group of actors. The facilitator must be neutral and have objective, able to work with all and manage conflicts, and not push any particular agenda. The facilitator must know about the subject area and should have a clear vision to guide the IP, but he or she should not have preconceived ideas as to how to solve problems. The facilitator should have a networker personality, able to manage relations, negotiations, and power dynamics over time. Listening and able to understand and facilitate the emerging issues in a group are key qualities. Important that he or she is sensitive to cultural and gender issues, and ready to help weaker actors. Positive attitude and responsiveness are critical for constructive interaction (Dror, 2016).

### Generating Issues and Evidence for Policy Action

The policy makers should also be engaged on the platform. Their presence often gives legitimacy to the operations of the platform and they could easily facilitate the necessary governmental support. Participation of policy makers in the activities of the platform ensures that they discover first-hand the

usefulness of infrastructures and policies. Policy makers' engagement on an IP should give a clearer insight to issues that require policy formulation.

Policies offer the environment in which development occurs. An extension professional is at the forefront of making development happen. He constantly encounters situations where existing policy restricts development interventions or where new policies could better support development. While policy is not his regular function, he is in a position to gather evidence to form good policies and organize the relevant stakeholders to express their policy needs to the relevant authorities.

Policy engagement platforms are where different stakeholders and policy makers come together to talk about how policy changes will benefit a specific situation. An extension professional can play a vital role in generating issues and evidence for policy action. To make sure that the proposed policy changes will benefit those who need it most, it is best to use a farmer-first approach. This means EAS provider should talk to the farmers about their situation under current policies and listen to their ideas and suggestions for how their situation can be improved. EAS provider can then record these suggestions and write a report that highlights the needs for a change in policy and states the proposed benefits of such a policy change.

The two forms of multi-stakeholder engagements that promote innovations are IPs and policy engagement platforms. Identifying the stakeholders and their stakes will help you guide the collective towards defining their shared vision, mission and goals which are important in facilitating their development. When you use stakeholder mapping it can help you decide which stakeholders you will need to influence the most for change for development to happen.

### Concluding Remarks

Innovation platforms have become a popular way to stimulate positive change in small-holder agriculture globally. In principle, they bring together a range of stakeholders to identify and solve common problems through the combined efforts all stakeholders involved in the platforms. They ensure their common interests by working together for the solution through combined efforts. However, its success mainly depends upon the quality of the facilitator(s) who is assigned to manage expectations of the platforms and ensure that innovation platform forums deliver on their purpose, are inclusive, and work for the good of the collective and the unreached, and each participant benefits from having been a part of the platform.



### Case-9.4: MMI virtual call centers organized farmers are resilient amid COVID-19

The GAFSP-financed Missing Middle Initiative (MMI) project on Increasing Access to Finance for Farmers Organizations in Bangladesh, promotes improved access to finance and complementary services to smallholder farmers through producer organizations (POs). This 3-year project is implemented by the FAO in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and in partnership with 55 POs and their apex is “Sara Bangla Krishak Society (SBKS)”.

MMI POs experienced many challenges when COVID-19 hit Bangladesh and those are: (i) price uncertainty for agricultural products, especially perishable commodities; (ii) risk of infection for farmers and farm laborers due to lack of protective equipment; (iii) shortage of farm laborers due to movement restrictions-the lack of agricultural machineries meant labor-intensive activities such as land preparation, transplantation, harvesting and marketing were impeded; (iv) farmer afraid of not being able to cultivate their next crop due to lack of labor, irregular supply of inputs, limited cash reserves and limited access to financing. The situation was critical in the remote areas where MMI POs are working.

Due to these challenges, SBKS at regional level (Barishal and Rangpur) and its member POs at community level start operating their day-to-day business virtually. They established 55 virtual call centers (VCCs), one in each PO and two at the regional level to coordinate. During a prior value chain mapping and *RuralInvest* training exercises, all POs prepared their members’ farm profiles, inventory and collected contact details of value chain actors. They had mobile accounts with financial service providers. Each of these helped to make the approach successful in serving the members since early April, 2020 and running till to date

Observing COVID-19 pandemic as a ‘wake-up call’, the POs came to recognize the importance of being organized and that virtual innovation platforms are promising key to the future of agriculture in Bangladesh. As of mid of November 2020, over 46,000 smallholder farmers (approximately 50% women) have benefitted from the VCCs. The VCC farmers have sold products worth more than BDT 44 million to buyers including private companies – PRAN, Rangpur Dairy and Bombay Sweets. They POs purchased essential inputs worth of BDT 8.2 million from suppliers. Participating farmers received higher prices on average when selling produce via their VCC and post-harvest losses were significantly reduced. This great initiative reaffirms that organized farmers are more resilient during shocks and reduces the risk of COVID-19 infection among the farming community. More details can be found at [www.bit.ly/ MMI](http://www.bit.ly/MMI)

### Suggested Group Work -1:

- (i). To enhance understanding of the innovation concept and how it is best supported by a system of information exchange by generators and users of that knowledge.
- (ii). To enhance understanding by having the discussions in smaller groups where everyone gets to share what they know.

Seated in groups of 4–5, discuss the following:

1. Think of a program/project you have been extensively involved in. – what (agricultural) needs have existed or continue to exist? – Who and how have various actors addressed these needs? What have been the sources of information and knowledge? – What innovations have come from this information exchange?
2. Prepare to present from the group discussions highlights of experiences and approaches used in your programs and projects.

## Objectives

- To further understand, where and how innovation takes place, especially the drivers, system characteristics necessary, and what one can do to support innovation.
- To enhance understanding by having the discussions in smaller groups where everyone gets to share what they know.

Seated in groups of 4–5, discuss the following:

Consider the project(s) you represent – Describe any related instances of product, process and system or transition innovation.

1. Describe the drivers (needs) and system necessary for sharing information, technology and resources that took place to support the innovation.
2. Identify who gained and who lost or how the system gained or lost.
3. If you were the system coordinator, what would you have done to support innovation that benefits as many actors as possible? and
4. Prepare to present from the group discussions highlights of experiences and approaches used to support innovation in your programs/projects.

## Suggested Group Work-2:

### Objective

Participants to explore and discuss why and how value chains require innovation to thrive, and what innovation systems provide such innovative support. Seated in groups of 4–5, discuss the following:

1. Consider a value or supply chain you have been involved with and describe instances where actors have innovated to advance their business objectives. – The difference between this group work and the previous one (Module 3) is that this one focuses on value and supply chains as innovation systems.
2. Describe the system actor(s) and especially the system relationships that supported or impeded innovation, and how that innovation has helped the chain grow or constrained targeted growth. Prepare to present from the group discussions highlights of experiences and approaches used to support innovation in your programs and projects.

## Suggested Group Work-3:

### Objective:

Participants will explore and suggest leadership and management activities that would support value chain innovation. Seated in groups of 4–5, in THE SAME value/supply chain from the previous group assignment, carry out the following:

In the chain systems described what leadership and management structures have been used in the past? Given the suggested initiatives to improve system relationships and achievement of actors' objectives, what fresh leadership and management structures, and processes can be initiated to support innovation? List and describe the suggestions. Prepare to present from the group discussions the chain you have developed.



## SESSION-10:

## MULTI STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES IN AIS

### Session Overviews

The session describes on the multi-stakeholder engagement (MSE) with its principles, strategies for making effective dialogues and factors affecting for a successful dialogue. The session also highlights the suitable conditions for effective application of MSE processes in AIS.

### Session Objectives

The main objectives of the session are to:

- i) Introduce participants with multi-stakeholder engagement process delivering effective EAS.
- ii) Provide basic information on the stakeholder's dialogue and factors affecting for making successful dialogue with MSEPs.
- iii) Enhance their knowledge and skills on Multi-stakeholder engagement processes for facilitation in EAS.

### Session Outcomes

After completing this session, you should be able to:

- Describe briefly Multi-stakeholders' engagement processes (MSEPs) in agricultural innovation systems;
- Understand on the strategies and dimensions for stakeholder dialogue; and
- Enhance knowledge on principles of stakeholder management; and
- Facilitate MSEPs effectively in EAS.

## Introduction

Multi-stakeholder engagement processes (MSEPs) are the (structured) process that are used to ensure participation on a specific issue and are based on a set of principles. Multi-stakeholders' partnerships are important vehicle for bringing together a diversity of skills and resources for more effective agricultural innovation systems (AIS). Partnerships can increase the efficiency of the AIS by making the best use of different but complementary resources. Collaborations, joint advocacy and actions can also potentially make a bigger impact on policy-makers and government. If partnerships are to be successful, however, it is necessary for them to have a clear vision, and purpose, in order to add value to the work of the partners and be carefully planned and monitored (Agrinatura and FAO, 2019).

Recent studies reveal that IPs are perceived as governance mechanisms for enhancing multi-stakeholder interaction

### Box 10.1: Some important Tips for facilitator-3

**A stakeholder** is a person, or group of persons, with an interest or concern in a particular process due to direct or indirect involvement.

▪ **Stakeholder analysis:** Understanding stakeholders and their stakes is achieved through a process of stakeholder analysis.

▪ **Stakeholder dialogue** is an interactive, working, communication process that involves all types of stakeholders in decision-making and implementation efforts. *Source: IRRI and CRISP, 2020*

and learning, capacity development and coordination and community linkages (Mayanja et al., 2012; Kilelu et al., 2013; Cullen et al., 2014).

Their functioning however depends on their organization, stakeholder representation, facilitation and institutional embedding capacity (Nederlof et al., 2011; Boorgard et al., 2013). Steps in the formation of viable-stakeholder platforms include; consultation and scoping, visioning and stakeholder analysis, adaptive planning and developing action plans (Hall, 2007; Brouwer et al., 2015).

Building on the definition given by the UN General Assembly, the MSPs seek to be forward-thinking, to make voluntary and collaborative relationships possible between various parties. They involve both public and non-public entities that can achieve common purposes, offer a neutral space for policy dialogue or undertake specific tasks and, as mutually agreed, share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits.

### Stakeholder Dialogue

Stakeholder dialogue is an interactive, working communication process that involves all types of stakeholders in decision-making and implementation efforts. It involves all interest groups with concern in a two-way communication process and focuses on increasing understanding and relations among stakeholders through the use of communication that enable participants to move forward with implementation plans.

Stakeholder dialogue is generative – discourages blame for the past and creates a shared future (World Bank, 2007). Change can be triggered both within the organization and the stakeholders by engaging in a dialogue or symmetrical communication.

Organizations can seek to be influenced, and influence other stakeholders by:

- Creating two-way communication channels (dialogue) to achieve mutual understanding and rational agreement or consent;
- Not having policies which dictate transactions with stakeholders;
- Involving stakeholders in negotiations rather than imposing initiatives on them. Inviting stakeholders to explore their concerns about initiatives (making changes along the way); and
- Reaching out to silent stakeholders and forming partnerships with stakeholders early on (World Bank, 2007).

For instance, in the case of smallholder dairying in Bihar, there are several stakeholders who could be organized under-1) value chain actors; and 2) enabling environment actors. The value chain actors are those organizations/ agencies that are directly involved in handling of milk and its products. The enabling environment actors include those agencies that play a supporting role for the value chain actors in discharging their roles. The enabling environment actors could be further divided into research actors and development actors.

### Box 10.2: Tips for effective stakeholder dialogue

- Key stakeholders should be involved in designing the dialogue and coordinating the process.
- Conducting a Stakeholder Mapping exercise will ensure that you do not miss any important groups affected by the issue at hand. Select people at approximately the same level of authority and keep a gender balance.
- Local facilitators should have had prior training in facilitation techniques and use the local language. They should make sure women have a voice and that the meeting is truly participatory.
- Having a permanent platform for multi-stakeholder consultations will ensure that the benefits of MSPs continue beyond the scope of the project or programme.
- During meetings, minimize long plenary presentations by experts and maximize group work and discussions. Different people should have the opportunity to take the floor and report back to plenary.
- Stakeholders often have different, sometimes even conflicting, goals and objectives. MSPs can be used to find common ground and build a shared vision for the future.
- Once you have identified your stakeholders, you must develop collective and shared goals, and build trust and accountability.

*Source: IRRI and CRISP, 2020.*

## Dimensions of Stakeholder Dialogue

There are five dimensions of stakeholder dialogue and engagement (Pederson, 2006) that define the extent to which a stakeholder dialogue is truly participatory. For a dialogue to be productive and participatory all these dimensions' matter:

1. **Inclusion** – Important groups and individuals affected by the issues need to be part of the decision-making process;
2. **Openness** – Dialogue should be open so that all stakeholders have a chance to voice their opinions;
3. **Tolerance** – One opinion should not take precedence over others; no arguments should be considered more valid;
4. **Empowerment** – Stakeholders should feel that they have the ability to affect the structure, process, and outcomes of dialogue. Stakeholders will be less committed if they sense an imbalance of power;
5. **Transparency** – Stakeholders involved in the dialogue should be provided timely information in order to make decisions and implement outcomes.

## Factors Affecting Stakeholder Dialogue

Even when there is an intention on the part of facilitators to hold a productive and participative process, there may still be factors that influence the quality of stakeholder dialogue. The following factors are crucial for stakeholder dialogues:

### Strategies for Stakeholder Dialogue

- **Commitment** – There must be a willingness to give priority and resources to the issue at the heart of the dialogue. Additionally, key persons must be committed to planning and implementation of decisions.
- **Capacity** – Refers to the physical, organizational, and human resource available for stakeholder dialogue. Organizations with more resources may have more capacity for dialogue. However, even when organizations have capacity it does not mean they are eager.
- **Consensus** – A precondition for dialogue is that there has to be some shared values, preferences as well as shared interest in the outcomes of the dialogue. There must be consent between participants in the dialogue and implementing agents.
- **Consciousness** – Organizational leaders must assist in the implementation of stakeholder dialogue. It needs to be integrated into the organizational system as opposed to something irrelevant. There should be a plan to convert stakeholder dialogue into action (Pederson, 2006).

### Box 10.3: Specific objectives have to be SMART

- **Specific** – Concrete, identifies what will change for whom;
- **Measurable** – Able to count or otherwise measure activity or results or conceptualize if using qualitative methods;
- **Attainable/Achievable** – Reasonable and feasible with given resources;
- **Relevant** – Relates to the overall goals of the programme; and
- **Timely** – Can be achieved within a specified period of time. *Source: GFRAS, 2016*

While multiple stakeholder dialogues apparently seem to be a panacea to working in silos and present a chance for participative and integrated decision-making, these can prove to be challenging. Organizations need to learn how to manage their stakeholders based on what type of stakeholders they have and the type of strategies that can be adapted for managing each type.

The Box 10.4 illustrates the seven principles that facilitator(s) should be cognizant of while managing stakeholders.

**Box 10.4: Principles of stakeholder management**

1. Acknowledge and actively monitor the concerns of all legitimate stakeholders, and take their interests appropriately into account in decision making and operations;
2. Listen to, and openly communicate with, stakeholders about their respective concerns and contributions, and about the risks they assume because of their involvement with the organization;
3. Adopt processes and modes of behaviour that are sensitive to the concerns and capabilities of each stakeholder constituency;
4. Recognize the interdependence of efforts and rewards among stakeholders, and attempt to achieve a fair distribution of the benefits and burdens of organizational activity among them, taking into account their respective risks and vulnerabilities;
5. Work cooperatively with other entities both public and private, to ensure that risks and harm arising from organizational activities are minimized, and where they cannot be avoided, appropriately compensated;
6. Avoid activities that might jeopardize inalienable human rights or give rise to risks that, if clearly understood, would be patently unacceptable to relevant stakeholders;
7. Acknowledge the potential conflicts between (a) their own role as organizational stakeholders; and (b) their legal and moral responsibilities for the interests of stakeholders, and address such conflicts through open communication, appropriate reporting and incentive systems, and where necessary, third party review. *Source: Clarkson Centre for Business Ethics, 1999.*

## Development of Collective and Shared Goals

Once the stakeholders have been identified, there must be a meeting where their diverse interests can be put together to form a collective and shared goal. Successful multi-stakeholder engagements have clearly articulated shared vision, mission and goals.

The goal should be the reason and incentive for the stakeholders to work together despite their different interests. The key question to guide development of a shared goal is: What outcome do we hope to achieve by the proposed development intervention or in addressing a developmental issue? This is normally achieved through consensus. A shared goal may emerge from a shared vision and mission, and within the goal, you can develop specific objectives, which address the key elements of the development issue being addressed. The goal, however, should be broad enough to embrace the diverse interests of the different stakeholders.

- **Goal:** The purpose or intention of the multi-stakeholder arrangement.
- **Collective and shared goal:** A situation or condition that is the desired result of the intervention and is agreed upon by all participating stakeholders.
- **Vision:** A description of the ideal future that the multi-stakeholder engagement will work to achieve over time.
- **Mission:** Clearly defines the ‘who, what, how, and why’ of the multi-stakeholder arrangement.

## Conditions for Effective Application

MSEPs can be important vehicles for learning and participation. Yet they are not necessarily the mechanism of choice for all situations or problems, not even for all those involving stakeholder participation. For an effective application of multi-stakeholder approach requires ability and a willingness amongst the different stakeholders to engage with each other, and to communicate and collaborate effectively.



Since MSEPs do not take place in isolation, much depends on the wider socio-political context in which they are being organized, and on the range of different skills and competencies that are being addressed (with the exact combination depending on the issue at stake and the process being followed).

If the right conditions are absent, MSEPs may prove costly exercises, both in terms of the financial and human resources they absorb, and the expectations they raise. If they are in place, MSEPs can have a lasting impact that goes beyond meeting the mere objectives of the process itself, and can promote a collective commitment and capacity to run ideas and plans into action.

For MSEPs to be applied effectively, stakeholders need (to develop) capacities in the areas of:

- Stakeholder analysis
- Leadership and facilitation
- Visioning
- Priority Setting
- Creating linkages & partnerships
- Mediating diverse interests, negotiations and conflict resolution.

## Concluding Remarks

Multi-stakeholder engagements have a great potential to instigate changes in the behaviour of the platform members, which has the potential for achieving large tangible impacts in the long term if coordinated properly and effectively by the participants of all stakeholders. However, success depends upon the quality of the facilitator(s) who is tasked with ensuring that stakeholders' engagement forums deliver on their purpose, are inclusive, and work for the good of the collective and the unreached, and each participant benefits from having been a part of the platform.

### Case 10.1: Multi-stakeholders' partnership enhanced farmer's income

In Bangladesh, due to the effect of Covid-19 pandemic supply chain was disrupted for the perishables. Farmers were not getting fair price of agricultural produce. The farm gate price of produce has fallen due to less transport facilities. The evolving situation pushed the whole nation in a difficult situation that demands a sustainable business model to restore the production and marketing of fresh produce in the country.

G4G (Group for Group) Community Farmer's Market approach has brought an innovation in marketing of fresh produce in the Covid-19 pandemic. G4G is basically an inclusive business model, through which the farmers are able to deliver their safe produce with good price as compared to traditional supply chain. Both the producers and consumers are being benefitted as there is no place for middlemen in the new innovative marketing system.

Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) and the Center for Development and Competitive Studies (CDCS) provided technical and logistic supports for production and marketing of fruits and vegetables protecting farmers' health in the Corona pandemic through a project funded by the Krishi Gobeshona Foundation (Agricultural Research Foundation) has initiated a multi-stakeholder approach to explore this collective marketing through farmers marketing group at Jhinaidah district and marketed to the staffs of Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory, Gazipur during lockdown period. The Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Department of Agricultural Marketing (DAM) and A2i of the Prime Minister's Office extended collaboration in this approach.

The G4G marketing model deemed to be expanded for other agro-commodities in different areas of the country and make the approach sustainable, effective strategic partnership seems to be crucial.

*Source: BARI and CDCS (2020). Market and value chain action research study report, 2020.*



### Exercise 1

1. You are the facilitator of a workshop involving policy makers, researchers, farmers' organizations and representatives of product organizations (private sector). They are invited to choose the value chain the government should invest extra money in. Everyone wants his/her own value chain to be chosen. The farmers' organizations want it to be the rice value chain as many farmers produce rice. The policymakers prefer cashew nuts because the product can be exported and will provide foreign currency. The discussion seems to escalate around these two positions.
2. As project manager you will guide a discussion on how certain funds for ICT investments should be spent. University management wants to invest in an expensive management information system because this enables them to steer the university towards competency-based learning. The research staff wants analysis software to support their research activities. To you it does not really matter as long as the budget will not be exceeded, and the investment will lead to better education because that is the requirement of the donor. There is much discussion and a deadlock arises.
3. You are a researcher and you are in a meeting with farmers, traders, transporters, and food processors to find out in which way you could collaborate in a project that focuses on tomato processing. Some participants have a strong opinion about the choice of technology to be tested. Transporters want the research to be about tomato paste manufacturing as this is a product that does not spoil quickly during transportation. Farmers prefer to have a tomato variety that produces year-round to avoid having a peak production which lowers the prices.

They also would want to avoid adding another task to their already busy schedule, so they are in favour of others adding the value. The factory that might do the processing is mainly concerned about getting enough production to avoid machinery standing idle. Researchers in food processing prefer to test solar drying of tomatoes because that does not require a lot of investments, can be done by farmers themselves, and delivers results quickly.

4. As head of faculty you have to guide the discussion on the use of project funds for buying new means of transportation. Teaching staff in the agri-department want to have a bus for transporting their student to the field for study tours and field work. The food and nutrition department has a lot of outreach projects and prefers buying three pick-ups to visit outside stakeholders and transport small amounts of food to the lab for processing. The animal science department wants a tractor to work the university farmland for free fodder and other income generating activities. You do not want to exceed the budget and it is not possible to buy all means of transport that are proposed. The discussion runs high and it's a deadlock.  
*Source: CDAIS, 2017.*

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