

# Training Manual for Facilitators

## USING SOFT SKILLS IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION



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**PRIA**

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# ABOUT THE TRAINING MANUAL

The Training Manual for Facilitators: Using Soft Skills in Non-Formal Education, is developed to address the needs of those trainers and facilitators who are engaged in non-formal education sector. This manual is designed to:

- ▶ Build an understanding on the concepts of soft skills in non-formal education
- ▶ A reference manual for the practicing trainer of using soft skills in non-formal education training
- ▶ A source book for sample training sessions, materials and exercises to be used during such training. It comprises of steps and activities for facilitating training on soft skills.

This manual covers references and practitioners' note to facilitate the sessions. The users of this manual can add references and local stories to make it more relevant and contextual for their own specific areas. This manual is based on the participatory training methodology developed over decades by the practitioners in PRIA and its partner organisations.

This manual is divided into two sections. Section 1 focuses on the relevance of soft skills in non-formal education and use of participatory training methodologies in training on soft skills. Section 2 takes users through various sessions that can be part of soft skills training.

# UNDERSTANDING SOFT SKILLS AND THEIR APPLICATION IN NON-FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION

The dictionary meaning of soft skills refers to the personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people. If we were to look at some other definitions, soft skills refer to a cluster of personal qualities, habits, attitudes and social graces that make someone a good employee or member of an organisation who is compatible to work with.

Soft skills include work ethics, attitude, communication skills, emotional intelligence and a whole host of other personal attributes. When talking about soft skills it is inevitable to mention about hard skills. Hard skills refer to trade skills and subject matter expertise, e.g. accounting, typing, operating machinery, etc. They are quantifiable and their application is universal. Hard skills are specific teachable abilities that are needed to perform a job.

If we were to look at soft skills, some of the most important soft skills are:

- ▶ Leadership
- ▶ Decision making
- ▶ Team work
- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Negotiation
- ▶ Conflict management
- ▶ Influencing
- ▶ Time management

We can divide these skills further. For example, communication skills will include verbal, written and non-verbal communication, presentation skills etc. Influencing skills will include facilitation, motivation and negotiation among others. Personal skills can be further divided into skills related to Emotional Intelligence, Stress Management, Self Confidence, Resilience, Assertiveness, Friendliness and Enthusiasm to name a few. In this manual, however, we will focus on Understanding Self, Leadership, Decision Making, Team Building, Communication and Conflict Management.

In the recent years, emphasis on importance of soft skills has grown all over the world. It is not only important to know technical aspects of a job but how this knowledge will transform into output has also become very important for the organisations. A person's behaviour, attitude, communication skills etc. play an important role not only in employability but also the importance of such skills in career growth. In today's context, no person is working in isolation. We are all connected to each other in a given job scenario. In this context if a person has excellent knowledge of her/his subject but doesn't have good relationship with the team and also unable to lead the team to complete a project, the work will get affected leading to dissatisfaction among all concerned.

Let's take a look at the importance of soft skills in non-formal education. If we were to go by the definition of non-formal education, it essentially is “an organised educational activity outside the established formal system that is intended to serve an identifiable learning clientele with identifiable learning objectives”.<sup>1</sup>

On many occasions non-formal education addresses the gaps in employability skills. With the growing importance of soft skills, employers also tend to focus on soft skills and assess these through various tests available.

Under such circumstances incorporation of soft skills needs to be acknowledged by professionals working on non-formal education. This will ultimately facilitate better working environment leading to improved productivity.

*Further resource links for reference:*

The Pickle Jar Theory by Jeremy Wright (<http://alistapart.com/article/pickle>)  
Why Soft Skills Matter ([www.mindtools.com](http://www.mindtools.com))  
<http://training.simplicable.com/training/new/87-soft-skills>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/newsletters/2011/YouthFlashJune2011>

# PERSPECTIVES ON PARTICIPATORY TRAINING AND ADULT LEARNING

## Perspectives on participatory training

Training has always been viewed as a learning process - learning of new skills, concepts and behaviour. As such it is an educational activity. However, it is usually viewed as distinct from formal education, like schooling. In general, training implies non-formal education of adults, but in a purposive, directed sense. Training also connotes a structured event, with boundaries of time, place and persons.

The traditional meaning of training has been the transfer of expertise from trainer to learner, where the trainer defines what a particular set of learning the learners need to learn. This approach to training believes that trainers know everything, and the learner is looked upon as an empty container to be filled up by the trainer. Learners play a passive role and are bound to learn what the trainer teaches.

This training approach does not allow learners to participate actively, and gives total control over the process to the trainer. Everything in this type of training from defining the objectives to evaluating the learner is done by the trainer. The choice of training methods is based upon the trainer's preference and convenience, and results in a predominance of lectures. The emphasis is on subject matter, or content, and the trainer's competence is ensured if she/he is a subject matter specialist. This approach to training is very close to formal education or schooling.

### Major assumptions in traditional training methodology

- Acquisition of subject knowledge by learners will automatically lead to action, or change in behaviour;
- The trainer 'owns' the knowledge and can therefore transmit or impart it as 'instructor';
- Learning depends essentially on the trainers' teaching capacity and the learners' learning capacity;
- Training is the responsibility of the trainer and the training institution;
- Knowledge, and training, are value-neutral and 'objective'.

An alternative view of training has evolved over the second half of the 20th century in which it is not limited to 'transfer of expertise' or equated with 'imparting knowledge'. Training is seen as a process of growth and discovery aimed not just at 'knowing more' but at 'behaving differently'. The focus is on building up one's critical consciousness, examining one's values, attitudes and orientations; on 'unfreezing' set notions and set patterns of behaviour, and

questioning, re-thinking, and re-learning. It is a non-formal, on-going process, in which both trainers and trainees learn from each other. This approach to training is intended to build the learners' confidence in their capacity to observe, criticise, analyse, and figure things out for themselves. Thus, learners discover they are just as good as their trainers and everyone else. They learn to cooperate, rather than compete, for the trainer's approval. Learners are encouraged to consider the whole social context and past history when they try to understand realities of their situation. Their learning revolves around their own needs, and progresses through opportunities for reflection and analysis.

This approach can be called training for change. Emphasis is more on learning than on training. Learners are encouraged to voice their own ideas and explore ways to solve their problems, investigate their own reality on the basis of their own experience. This approach to training aims at freeing people from patterns of thinking imposed upon them by dominant forces. Its methodology is learner-centred, experience-based and open-ended.

#### Major assumptions in alternative approach to training

- People cannot be developed; they can develop themselves.
- Acquired knowledge does not automatically lead to action or changed behaviour, people first need to be convinced about the importance of change.
- Learners themselves are a rich source of information and knowledge about the real world.
- The collective is a powerful tool for learning and change.
- Training and knowledge can never be neutral<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> *The purpose of training is to influence behaviour and attitude. In Participatory Training the facilitator influences the learners to learn new perspectives and behaviour towards the issue in discussion. In such learning situation the facilitator also brings her/his perspective and experience in the discussion. For example, if a training is focussed on addressing violence against women, the learning group cannot remain neutral. They are expected to raise their voices and also work with others to end this practice.*

Participatory Training is an educational strategy based on the alternative approach described above. Learners are active participants in the educational process, and their needs and questions, their reflection and analysis, and their strategies for change carry the process forward.

It is important to realise that Participatory Training is not just a set of techniques. It functions in a certain historical, socio-political context. The ideological bias of Participatory Training needs to be understood clearly, otherwise the methodology can get reduced to a set of tricks and gimmicks. We need to be aware of the constant danger of co-option, where similar words and activities are used but the hidden intention is basically to make people conform and accept control.

Participatory Training aims at creating an experience of personal and collective change, thus strengthening people's understanding that change is possible, within one's self and at the level of the group.

Participatory Training encourages people to question what they have always accepted, to critically examine their own experiences, to derive insights through analysis. This process of releasing people's critical faculties enables them to discover and exert their latent powers for autonomous constructive action.

Participatory Training recognises and validates authentic and accurate people's knowledge which is based on the experience of reality, and synthesises it with fresh insights and restructured concepts based on the analysis of experience. The new body of knowledge thus created leads to a powerful sense of ownership and a willingness to transform the reality. Learners thus become prepared for action.

In conclusion however, it must be mentioned that the role of Participatory Training in bringing about change has some limitations.

Firstly, structures and systems of society do not change within the training programmes. Individuals can understand social dynamics and social change, their potential role in the process of change, assess their strengths and weaknesses, acquire relevant skills to play a meaningful role and appropriate values necessary to build an alternative society. Groups can learn how to function as an effective unit for action, and groups can experience in a microcosm, the possibilities of democratic functioning in an egalitarian society. But all these, notwithstanding, structural transformation can never be brought about through training alone. Additional important steps outside the training context are needed for social change.

Secondly, while working towards change with poor, downtrodden, illiterate people, there is a great temptation to define change for them. As such, the educational intervention basically mobilises support for a particular cause that we consider 'right'. We can skilfully manipulate their thinking so that they start believing it is their cause. In this we become equally guilty of mind-control as any other oppressive power. Participatory Training may create informed options for the learner, but it gives the learner the option to accept or reject any option.

If learners are helped to discover and develop their inner resources through an environment providing opportunities to use their abilities, they will demonstrate an increased capacity to manage their lives. We need to trust them to do this. Our responsibility is to help learners achieve a "raised consciousness" and to liberate their latent powers of independent thought and inquiry, so that they begin to view themselves as creators of ideas and initiators of action.

### Participatory training and adult learning

Participatory Training deals with adults, and as such, has its theoretical base in the principles of adult learning. According to these principles, adult learning takes

place in a different way, and under different conditions, from those of children's formal school education. Ineffectiveness of programmes for adults may have partly to do with lack of understanding about the various principles and conditions of learning. Those who try to make adults learn in an environment similar to formal school and by the same methods sometimes end up believing it is impossible to bring about any change in adults. Another common misconception is that most learning takes place through childhood and stops after adolescence, and that it is impossible to alter this learning afterwards.

Contrary to such beliefs, people learn, grow and change even in adult life. Effective adult learning takes place when the essential characteristics of their learning mode are operationalised as principles guiding the process. There are five key principles:

*A. Adults come to the learning situation with a well-defined self-concept, and their learning can be facilitated by helping them to build up their self-concept.*

If the self-concept is low, the learner thinks that she/he is incapable, ignorant, inexperienced and powerless. This blocks new learning. This self-concept may have been conditioned by adverse circumstances, by marginalisation and exploitation. If the learner is helped to overcome this low self-concept and recognises that she/he is capable, has some thing to contribute and has the potential to learn, she/he becomes more open to the learning process. Similarly, an unrealistically high self-concept may also block learning.

*B. Adult learning is an emotional experience, both in the sense that certain emotions are associated with learning, and that learning occurs through feeling as much as thinking or acting.*

All changes entail risk. Thus, the act of learning creates anxiety, stress, perhaps fear, frustration or helplessness. This needs to be understood and handled with sensitivity, especially when dealing with those who have never been to school and are very apprehensive about the learning situation. Moreover, feelings as such are an important mode of learning, a basis for learning, and a vehicle of learning. We avoid what angers us, or frightens us, or what we are contemptuous of. Conversely, we are eager to find out more, learn more, about the things for which we have positive feelings.

*C. Adults choose whether to learn or not.*

Adult learning is volitional and autonomous. Forced learning does not last. Adults need to be interested and ready before they learn something. If they have come non-voluntarily or as a result of external demands, they will need extra support, encouragement and guidance. Learning improves when self-directedness is encouraged, when learners are involved in planning and monitoring the process. Interest can be heightened by feedback on progress in the desired direction of learning.

#### *D. Adults learn what they think is relevant to their lives and their problems.*

Unlike children's learning which is for postponed application, adults want to learn today what they can apply tomorrow. Hypothetical problems, or content areas far removed from their reality, appear a 'waste of time'. Learning is easier when it involves practical material related to current or perceived future concerns of the learner.

#### *E. Adults learn based on experience.*

Adults come to a learning situation with a rich storehouse of past experience which can be both a potential learning resource or an unavoidable hindrance, for past experiences determine how a learner interprets new experiences, and how she/he learns. Moreover, adults equate experiences with themselves, their understanding of the meaning of life. Devaluing or ignoring adults' experience is tantamount to a personal rejection. Sharing of experiences by learners and trainers, and giving value to past and present experiences, creates a readiness for new learning.

Adults prefer learning 'relationally', that is, perceiving how facts relate to reality, rather than memorising facts. Effective learning occurs when adults use past or present experience to gain a deeper understanding of their reality, and thus prepare to encounter fresh experiences.

### **Importance of building a learning environment in participatory training**

Looking at the principles of adult learning, it becomes evident that a special learning environment is essential for adults to learn effectively.

A learning environment is not given to the trainers, it has to be created, built, sustained and nurtured by the trainers. In the context of our learners and the learning process, the challenge of building and sustaining an environment that would facilitate both individual and collective learning, that would facilitate a process of questioning, critiquing, and reflection becomes very crucial, and as trainers we have to create conditions for the principles of adult learning to become operationalised. Some of the key characteristics of the learning environment are:

#### *A. Valuing learners and their experiences*

A fundamental aspect of the learning environment is valuing the learner, valuing her/his uniqueness, experiences, contributions, knowledge, and capacity to learn, grow and change. Valuing and respecting the learner becomes the hallmark of creating a learning environment and this valuing has to be demonstrated by the actions of the trainer, by the conditions created in the training and not by empty words alone. This involves that the trainers, both during formal (during the planned and structured training sessions) and informal sessions (discussion that takes place outside the training sessions), pay keen attention to the learners, try and understand what they are saying and sharing, and how support is being provided to the learners.

## *B. Sharing personal experiences*

Since adults learn from their experience, conditions have to be created for an easy, open, systematic and effective sharing of their past experience. Sharing of experience doesn't mean endless, open-ended story-telling sessions. Sharing has to be focussed in relation to specific learning objectives and therefore structured in a way that learners find the opportunity to share their experience in relation to those learning objectives with other learners and the trainers. This is why the task of facilitating small groups sharing, expressing, opening up, articulating, listening to others, caring for others, becomes an important one. The purpose of sharing is also to promote critical analysis and be challenged to experiment with new ideas, feelings, behaviour and action. Mutual sharing process involves not merely learners' sharing, but the trainers also sharing information about themselves and their experiences.

## *C. Openness*

Another principle of the learning environment is openness. Openness to oneself, openness to others, openness to learn, openness to question, openness to examine, openness to observe. Conditions have to be created so that learners and trainers can be open with their thoughts and their feelings and they can be open with their actions – open with themselves in the privacy of oneself and open with themselves in the presence of some others and open with others, on their face. This is important because learning occurs in relation to others, with the support of others, in the process of reflecting on oneself, on others and on the situation. For example, a training on addressing violence against women with the survivors of violence will require a safe and open environment where they can share their deep personal experiences with the objective to change their lives.

## *D. Challenging*

The next characteristic of learning environment is that there should be a challenge to the learners. Learners should be provoked, stimulated, cajoled, and challenged. It is not a passive environment; it is not doing your own thing; it is questioning, critiquing, asking, stimulating, and provoking. Creating conditions for people to be stimulated, to stretch themselves beyond their immediate capacity, to utilise their potential creatively, to utilise their capacity, to unfreeze themselves, to realise their critical faculties.

## *E. Safety*

Another key characteristic of the learning environment is psychological safety and comfort. The learner should be challenged but not be dumped upon. The learner should be stimulated and provoked but never undermined. The learner should be questioned, but not demolished. A sense of psychological safety – I can be myself, I can say to myself, I can look at myself, I can try myself, I can make mistakes myself and yet be acceptable to and by others, is an essential aspect of the learning environment. Safety issues are also related to the security provided

in and by the group. This facilitates opening up, taking risks, and sharing about oneself.

#### *F. Support*

A related aspect, therefore, is support – emotional support, intellectual support, behavioural support –and availability of support – individually available, available in small groups, creating conditions so the learners are supporting each other as much as the trainers and facilitators are supporting the learners and themselves – support in action and not as a verbal exercise. Support needs to be provided both during the sessions and outside the sessions. Support also needs to be solicited from the learners by trainers.

#### *G. Feedback*

And finally, the learning environment must have conditions built in for feedback – for information to come back to the person and to the group. Through mechanisms which are easy and relaxed, and not constrained and difficult; feedback from each other, from self, in unobtrusive ways, from the trainers and the learners, continuous feedback on one's thoughts, emotions and actions; on what one has learnt and what one has attempted.

In brief, these are some of the key characteristics of an effective learning environment. In order to build it and sustain it, there are several things a trainer needs to do:

- ▶ The design of the training should be such that it helps in building the environment all the time keeping learners involved. It means the subject matter and the learning methods should be relevant to the learner.
- ▶ Shared responsibility for learning by the learners; involving the learner, soliciting their support, commitment, responsibility, feedback towards building and maintaining the learning environment, supporting their roles as facilitators, counsellors, friends with their peer groups.
- ▶ Physical aspects of the training, ensuring that all physical, administrative aspects (food, travel, etc.) of training are well coordinated and managed and do not cause stress and anxiety of any kind of the learners. Even small things like the cleanliness and organisation of the training room, advance preparation/installation of technical aids, organising small rooms for group exercises, noise effects, too much movement in the room (people coming and going, etc.) become important issues for the trainers to ensure that the learners do not get disturbed or have to fend for themselves in the process.
- ▶ Most importantly, the trainer's behaviour becomes a significant contributor to the learning environment. Knowledge of training design alone is not enough, their understanding about themselves is crucial –their perspectives, values, behaviour and action – how do they respond to learners, how do they care, what effort they put into the content areas, how do they enhance the self-

esteem of learners, etc. All these set the normative structures for the training. What do they do to set up the others in the training? What do they do to set up the learning environment? All these have implications of what the learners would do, when they go back from their training centre.

### The conditions for learning

*An environment of active people* – People learn when they feel they are personally involved with others in a learning process.

*A climate of respect* – When a high value is placed on individuals and a sense of caring prevails.

*A climate of acceptance* – Accepting a person means that she/he can be herself/himself and express her/his beliefs without fear.

*An atmosphere of trust* – When people have a feeling of trust in themselves and in others.

*A climate of self-discovery* – When learners are helped to find out about themselves and to meet their own needs, rather than having their needs dictated to them.

*A non-threatening climate* – So that persons can confront each other and ideas without fear.

*A climate of openness* – When personal concerns, feelings, ideas and beliefs can be expressed and examined openly.

*An emphasis on the uniquely personal nature of learning* – When each individual knows that her/his values, beliefs, feelings and views are important and significant.

*A climate in which differences are thought to be good and desirable* – When differences in people are as acceptable as differences in ideas.

*A climate which recognises the right of individuals to make mistakes* – Learning is facilitated when error is accepted as a natural part of the learning process.

*An atmosphere that tolerates ambiguity* – When alternative solutions can be explored without the pressures of having to find an immediate single answer.

*An emphasis on co-operative evaluation and self-evaluation* – When people can see themselves as they really are, with the help of their peers.

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*This section has been adapted from "A Manual for Participatory Training Methodology in Development", Sixth Edition 2011, published by the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), India.*

# UNDERSTANDING METHODS OF PARTICIPATORY TRAINING

How do we select appropriate learning-training methods that will best convey the content areas of the training programme? In the traditional view of training, lectures are a favoured method for conveying any subject matter. With more progressive modes of training we have group discussions. Some programmes list slide shows and video films as methods.

In Participatory Training, a wide range of methods exist to suit the basic criteria of effective learning, learner involvement and sustained interest. We can briefly look at the methods, reflect upon the principles of method selection, and then study each method in depth, noting the procedure, advantages and possible problems.

At this point it would be helpful to point out the differences between the terms method, tools/aids and techniques for these are often used interchangeably. The term method refers to how the subject matter is going to be dealt within a broad sense. Thus one could use a discussion, a lecture, a demonstration etc. Tools or aids refer to the various supporting materials that are used in the course of using a method e.g., slides or posters in the course of a lecture, a film clip or a model during a demonstration and so on. Techniques refer to variations in the use of the method. Thus techniques under the broad heading group discussion method could be plenary, brain-storming session, fish-bowl groups etc.

## Methods used in Participatory Training: An overview

The methods used in Participatory Training include not merely lectures and group discussions, but also role play, simulations, structured exercises and instruments, case studies in a variety of forms, and so on. Several other experiences are also used in Participatory Training, such as field visits, practice sessions, games, self-study, video review and others which enhance the impact of learning.

The purpose most trainings is a combination of developing knowledge, changing attitude and enhancing skills. Effective achievement of this purpose will depend on choosing the most appropriate method for each aspect. A useful framework to understand which learning methods are best suited for increasing knowledge, which ones for awareness and which ones for skill.

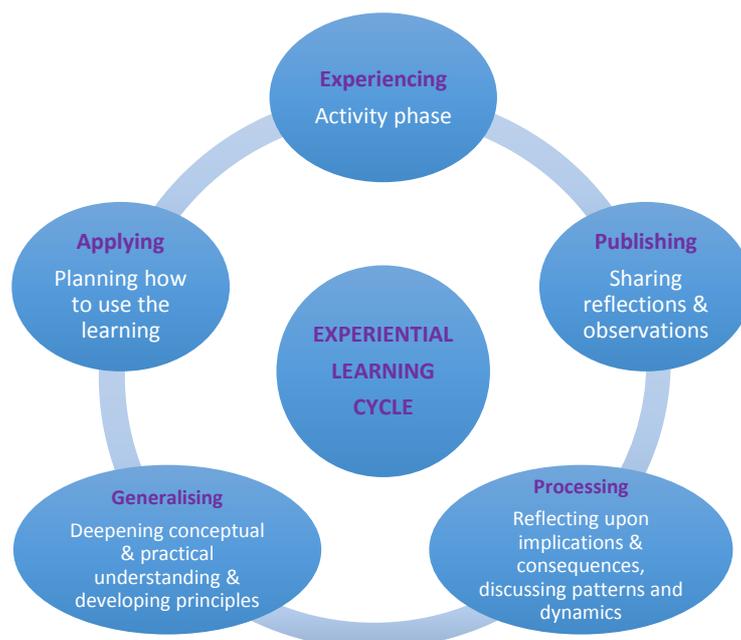
**Methods useful for increasing knowledge:** In this category we have lectures, either purely verbal or accompanied by visual aids such as slides, posters, models and so on. Then we can use field visits and demonstrations for clearer understanding of the subject. Self-study of given reading material is also useful, especially with a highly literate learner group. Educational slide shows, filmstrips or video films can also be used for enhancing knowledge on a particular topic.

**Methods useful for increasing skill:** The best way to learn how to do something is to try it out oneself. Thus practice sessions are essential for skill development in any area. It may help to precede these with demonstrations by a more skilled person. If circumstances permit, actual apprenticeship under an experienced and skilled person can sharpen the learner's competence.

**Methods useful for generating awareness:** There are a number of methods by which learners are engaged in learning at the emotional level, and most of these are based on experiences – past or present. Among these methods are role plays where past experiences are spontaneously re-enacted. Small group discussions also enable learners to pool experiences and ideas and collectively analyse them. Simulations and structured exercises generate 'here-and-now' feelings which are then processed to derive broader insights. Case studies – either written, oral, pictorial or through song, provide opportunities to look at the experiences of others and learn from them through analysis. Other ways to create awareness include instruments which are useful for learning about oneself, and games, like trust games, board games and so forth.

## Experiential learning

Participatory Training draws largely from the tenets of adult learning which hold that adults learn best from and through experience. One's own experiences – both past and present – and other's experiences form a fundamental source of learning. But merely undergoing an experience, feeling some emotions and getting some vague impressions does not lead to a productive learning impact. We need to reflect on the experience, analyse it – its structure, its dynamics, our reactions – and gain insights, derive more broadly applicable principles. Based on these, we prepare to go through similar experiences in life with a transformed vision that expresses itself through changed behaviour.



Often during the continuous learning of our lives we go through all these steps instinctively, rapidly. For instance, when faced with unpleasant experiences we automatically withdraw, we decide to try something else next time. In Participatory Training the crucial step is deep reflection, the systematic examination, the analysis of what is behind the experience, and what is behind our reaction to it. The entire experiential learning cycle is deliberately used to equip learners with the strength to confront experiences and derive conscious learning from them.

Training methods that use the Experiential Learning Cycle are called “Structured Experiences” since the cycle is used in a systematic and purposeful manner. Examples include role-play, case-study, simulation, etc.

### Principles of method selection

Given the long list of learning-training methods, on what basis do we choose? There are a number of key considerations to be kept in mind.

**What is the focus of learning?** Do we want learning to occur only at the intellectual level, or do we want learners to be moved at a more emotional level? Is the subject matter a collection of facts to be known, or is it imperative that skills in using these facts must be developed? We have to critically assess our content area and depending on whether the focus of learning is knowledge, skill or awareness, we have to select an appropriate method.

**Who are the learners?** Is the group entirely heterogeneous or are they similar to each other in age and experience? If the group is entirely illiterate, methods have to be carefully chosen so as to ensure everyone’s involvement. Moreover, when learners are unfamiliar with each other the trainers need to use non-threatening methods which will enable them to interact with others. For learners who have not been to formal school, sitting through long lectures will be difficult.

**Have we recognised learner’s knowledge and experience base?** A basic tenet of Participatory Training is the acknowledgement and validation of the adult learner’s rich experience base and practical real-life knowledge. If we use methods which project the trainer or books or academic experts as the source of all knowledge, we fail to demonstrate our respect for the learners. The training programme should provide constant opportunity for learners to share experiences, to validate what they have achieved in their past, to discuss common problems and synthesise new information with past concepts.

**Is a conducive learning environment being created?** Participatory Training entails total involvement and interest of the learners. Methods have to be chosen that are highly interactive, preferably hands-on (learning by doing) and challenge the creativity of learners. The learning process should be exciting and evocative, in which learners feel all their capacities are being used, feel alert and stimulated. The choice of method and the subsequent designing of the activity are crucial elements in creating this vital learning atmosphere.

**Does it foster both individual and collective learning?** The choice of methods has to be such that it enables all learners to move at their own pace, without being pushed or left behind. Moreover, it has to promote cooperative learning in which individuals learn from each other, and perceivable learning occurs at the level of the group as a whole. If the learners do not already know each other, methods have to be especially chosen to help build norms of trust and a climate of openness in the group. Some content areas need more individual realisation, for example, understanding self. There the individual learners need to be provided with the space to learn, as well as be challenged to do so.

**What are the trainer's capacities and competence?** All trainers to begin with are not skilled in using all the methods. Lack of experience or confidence may reduce the learning impact of the method. Meticulous preparation while designing the method, and constant upgradation of trainer skills through practice with feedback (or apprenticeship) is necessary for effective learning to occur.

### Description of learning-training methods

Some important learning-training methods commonly used in Participatory Training are described below. Apart from the actual procedure involved in using the method effectively, its advantages and disadvantages have also been mentioned. The methods described include:

- Lecture
- Practice
- Small Group Discussion
- Case Study
- Role Play
- Simulation
- Use of Video

Some other useful training activities have also been described, like the use of reading material, demonstrations, field visits, slide shows, films, pictures, posters, games and ice-breakers. Additional information has also been given on designing and debriefing of structured experiences.

## Lecture

The lecture method is an effective way to introduce new information or concepts to a group of learners. A concise, stimulating and well-delivered lecture is always appreciated by learners. Unfortunately, few lectures are well prepared or learner-oriented. Besides, it is often used in such a manner that it is one-way, monotonous, directive, and encourages passivity. But it needs not always be so far lecture is a valid method in the participatory training framework also. The point is how to make it interesting and participatory.

### How then should the lecture method be used?

The lecture method is primarily used to build upon the learners' existing base of knowledge. Thus when beginning a lecture, it is essential to place the lecture at the learners' level. This can be done by asking some relevant and elective questions, and not starting straight away. Thereafter, the trainer will have to make constant efforts to situate the new information in the context of the learner by continuously providing examples and illustrations to relate it to the learners' context.

### Use of lecture

- for conveying new information and concepts to the learners
- when learners' experiences need to be situated and related within a theoretical framework
- for stimulating and motivating learners for further enquiry
- for presenting a specialised body of external information through expert resource persons

### Giving an effective lecture

- prepare for the lecture, become very familiar with the subject matter;
- identify and prepare supporting aids to illustrate the points made;
- A power point presentation could also be used during lectures where only the main points can be listed down through bullet points. It is important that these points are explained during presentation.
- keep white board or flip chart and marker pen ready for noting key point;
- provide examples to link the subject matter to the lives of the learners;
- Sequence the contents logically, sequentially and systematically, building upon previous content areas;
- ask questions to check whether the learners are following;
- provoke the learners to ask questions;

- Maintain eye contact with the learners to assess whether they are following or not, whether they are interested or bored;
- maintain time stipulations, don't get carried away, but at the same time don't sacrifice essential material for the sake of time;
- have a seating arrangement in which all can see the aids equally well and hear the lecture; A circular seating arrangement or if there are too many people, a double circle is useful;
- be aware of your own body movements, and facial expressions;
- speak clearly, loudly, and use simple language;
- avoid being prescriptive, try to be provocative;
- if there is more than one trainer, then the others can supplement as well as monitor the process of learning.

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• allows the presentation of facts, information and concepts in a relatively short span of time</li> <li>• multiple resource persons, knowledgeable and with different points of view can interact with the learners</li> <li>• can be used with illiterate learners</li> <li>• a diverse range of supportive materials can be used to support the content areas e.g., slides, charts, posters, etc.</li> <li>• a large number of learners can be accommodated at one time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the world view of the speaker dominates</li> <li>• it does not promote interaction in most cases</li> <li>• participants can get carried away by the charisma and personality of the speaker instead of focusing on and analysing what s/he is saying</li> <li>• the pace is trainer-controlled</li> </ul>

### Reading Material

Reading material is very commonly used in the course of a training in the form of books and handouts. There are a few points that must be kept in mind to use reading material effectively.

Reading material can be broadly classified as essential and additional. One has to be very careful in classifying because a common error is to distribute a whole bunch of reading material which the learners may not read due to lack of interest or time.

Reading material which is considered essential should be distributed at the appropriate point in the training. i.e., when the subject matter in question is being dealt with. It should be precise, to the point and presented in easily understandable language. While we may have been moved by articles and passages in books we should try to present the same information in concise and simple form because original articles often tend to be complicated. Try to avoid giving exhaustive reading material because it can be exhausting to read.

Always allocate time for reading. We often do not leave structured time for reading and assume that the learners will read it outside the sessions. If the matter is essential, time for reading must be incorporated into the training timetable.

Do not assume that the learners will have understood the reading material just because they have read it. If possible, keep some time for the learners to discuss what they have read, for them to clarify their doubts.

Reading material which is considered additional can be given at the end of the session. If it is given together with the essential reading materials, then the learners might waste valuable time trying to figure out the non-essential pieces.

### **Practice and Apprenticeship**

Practice and apprenticeship are methods which are of paramount importance for skill training. The difference between the two lies in that practice is done in controlled situations while apprenticeship is done in real life situations and is usually of longer duration. It is essential in both methods that the learner be supervised by the trainer and be given feedback. These two methods can be used for any skill. In the course of a training it is easier to incorporate practice, while apprenticeship can be an entire training in itself.

### **Demonstrations**

Demonstration refers to that method in which the learners are provided with an opportunity to observe for themselves the object or processes that they wish to learn. It can be real-life or through make-believe or models. This method is useful in conveying complex information simply, as seeing and understanding is considerably easier than hearing and understanding. The learner is encouraged to ask questions about what she/he sees. Demonstrations are made in controlled situations like a laboratory, training hall, demonstration farm etc. Examples include demonstrating what a biogas plant or a sanitary latrine is through a model, demonstrating how to conduct an interview by the trainer, demonstrating how to conduct safe deliveries to traditional birth attendants through models etc.

### **Field visits**

Field visits refer to demonstrations in situ. i.e. where the subject matter actually occurs or happens in real life. Some examples of field visits are as follows: taking the learners to a hospital in the course of a health training or taking learners to villages in the course of a Participatory Rural Appraisal training. Or taking community level workers to the block office for a training on local government etc. The emphasis again is on observing, asking questions and understanding. The learners are not encouraged to participate in any activity during a field visit. The trainers must remember to prepare the field adequately before taking the learners to the field. Conversely, the learners must be carefully

briefed about what they should observe, and about decorum and norms that need to be respected.

### **Slide shows / Films/ Animation**

Slide shows and films are widely used in training. They are also used to convey knowledge or information but differ from a lecture using slides or films in the sense that in the lecture they are used as supporting material. They may also be used as the main medium for conveying the subject matter. One must remember that before using the slides or films the learners must be thoroughly briefed as to what they are going to see and what they must be careful to note. In the course of a slide show it may be necessary to provide a commentary linking the slides if no recorded commentary is available.

A major advantage of using films and slides is they allow the trainer to bring inaccessible real life situations into the training. A major disadvantage is that slides and films tend to be highly directive and do not allow any scope for learner's interaction. One possible way of making films and slides interactive is to frequently pause, ask the learners what they have understood or observed, encourage them to ask questions and so on. Unfortunately, this is seldom done and trainers tend to leave learners alone once a film or slide show is on. Films and slides may also be used in skill training when the slides or films show the actual practice of the skill in a step-by-step fashion.

These days animation is also being used very effectively as a communication tool. It is a very powerful and effective tool of communication. Short clippings on many important messages including social messages are being made using animation. To understand this better, a reference for a short animation film is mentioned here: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrILtpcYu1Y>)

### **Structured Experiences**

As mentioned earlier, structured experiences refer to those learning-training methods where the trainer deliberately uses an experience for the purpose of learning and the experiential learning cycle is followed. A number of learning-training methods using structured experiences will be described followed by some general considerations that have to be kept in mind when using these methods.

### **Small Group Discussion**

This is the most commonly used method under this category, because a small group discussion uses learners own past experiences in a very deliberate manner. In this method the learners are divided into groups of 5 to 6 people and given a real life or relevant subject matter or question to discuss. This discussion is carried on by the learners on the basis of their own past experiences, attitudes and values, on the basis of which they arrive at new knowledge, new insights. Discussion cannot be hypothetical or speculative if this method is to qualify as a

structured experience. It is important to realise that the discussion is not an end in itself and the entire cycle needs to be completed, i.e., each small group should then present its discussions to the large group and on the basis of their presentations, working principles should be evolved. It is a common mistake to have the discussions without subsequent presentation and summarisation.

### Steps

- Instruct the group clearly about the task, specify time and the form of presentation.
- Divide the large group into small groups.
- If different groups may be given different tasks, the groups should be divided first.
- Let the groups discuss (through sharing and analysis) the matter under consideration for the stipulated time.
- Let all the groups reassemble into a large group.
- Let one or two individuals from each group present their discussion to the large group.
- Add any relevant points that you feel have been left out and use the group presentations to arrive at a theoretical framework.

### Uses

This method can be used for sharing information and experience.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It allows the learners to be in control, in respect of pace, content and focus</li> <li>• It provides opportunities for the learners to express themselves</li> <li>• It allows the learners to validate their knowledge and skills</li> <li>• It allows learners to clarify, reflect and reconfigure their experiences</li> <li>• It helps in promoting a sense of belonging in a group</li> <li>• It can be empowering once the learners realise their own ability for critical thinking and change through this medium</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is time consuming</li> <li>• It requires active facilitation by the trainer in order to keep the group focussed on the task</li> <li>• There is a possibility that dominant or aggressive members may hijack the process</li> <li>• Members might not be serious and that affects the quality of the discussion</li> <li>• It requires more space than a lecture</li> <li>• In mixed gender groups, women can be ignored</li> <li>• It is difficult to monitor the progress of many different small groups</li> <li>• Trainer needs special skills to facilitate, debrief and summarise the discussions</li> </ul>

### Fishbowl

A smaller group consisting of 6-8 persons is made to form a circle (inner circle) in the middle of the room. Remaining group members are asked to sit outside of this circle (outer circle) to observe the process. The inner circle is given a topic to discuss.

Instructions for inner circle:

- Everyone should speak at least once
- When one person is speaking, don't interrupt her/him
- The discussion should be around the topic at hand
- Either the group can decide who would facilitate the process and/or a leader can emerge on her/his own

Instructions for outer circle

- Listen carefully
- Take notes wherever needed
- Observe (nonverbal communication in the group)
- Who was taking the lead?
- Did any leader emerge?
- Did the group follow the topic?

After the first round, feedback is given to the inner circle group on the process on following points:

- Did everyone get an opportunity to speak?
- Did someone dominate the discussion?
- Did the group achieve its objective?

After the feedback round, the positions are reversed i.e. the inner circle becomes outer circle and outer circle now forms the inner circle to discuss on the same topic as earlier.

## Case Study

In this method, other's experiences are provided to the group in the form of a case study. These experiences are reflected upon and analysed by the learners to then extract or arrive upon new principles. The learners own experiences, values, feelings form the basis for analysing others' experiences. Case studies (and stories) may be presented in written or verbal forms or even through the medium of film or song, depending upon cultural appropriateness.

## Steps

- Present the case study
- Divide the group into smaller groups and give them the task (question)
- Allow individuals to reflect
- Let them discuss
- Debrief and consolidate

## Uses

- Can be used to convey complex theoretical concepts in a simple way

- Allows the group to reflect on its appropriateness in their milieu/life
- Allows discussions/ sharing on potentially threatening situations on which the learners will not be willing to share if asked directly
- Sharpens learners' analytical and diagnostic skills
- Exposes learners to situations they might not ordinarily experience in their own lives
- Exposes learners to similar experiences elsewhere to enable them feel a sense of solidarity and validation.
- Helps in creating new knowledge through collective reflection, analysis and synthesis.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple</li> <li>• Can be used with illiterates and relatively unsophisticated people</li> <li>• Can be used for cognitive learning too</li> <li>• Low cost, culturally appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be difficult to find an appropriate case study</li> <li>• The case study may be too general to focus on a specific issue</li> <li>• Case studies written by someone else contains within it the writers' perceptions, feelings and ideologies which may lead to distortion of the objective reality</li> <li>• Hypothetical or prepared items may be too idealistic</li> </ul>

### Pictures/Posters

With pictures and posters, the steps, uses, advantages and disadvantages are almost the same as the above. The only reason for treating it separately is that it is a very important medium when dealing with illiterates. It can also be used in a variety of ways. It can be used singly, or a number of pictures sequentially, or a number of pictures without any sequence. A story can be substituted with a sequence of pictures or else learners can be asked to make a story with unserialised posters. The various modes of use depend upon the purpose.

### Role Play

One of the most common training methods in use is called Role Play. Role Play is used in a variety of ways:

- A. A small group enacts role play about a situation where other learners observe the role play. A discussion follows that enactment. In this use of role play, it is similar to a demonstration where learning occurs through observation. Such a role play can be enacted by the trainers themselves or a few outsiders or a handful of learners, with or without trainers.
- B. In another way, role play is used to stimulate discussion on complex issues. A brief enactment by trainers or learners or both can be used to stimulate further group discussion on similar issues and experiences that learners

share. This method of learning is essentially group discussion where role play merely acts as a stimulant or catalyst for the discussion that follows. In this use, it is similar to an aid like charts, video clipping, etc.

- C. In certain situations, role play is also used to practice some skills. For example, the adult education instructors can be trained to practice how to motivate adult learners by enacting different roles. The prime method of learning here is by practicing and receiving feedback from learners and trainers after that practice.
- D. In the fourth way, role play is a re-enactment of past experiences. In this sense, all learners are involved to enact an issue or a situation about which they are familiar in their past. For example, a group of 25 illiterate women learners can be divided into 5 sub-groups to prepare and re-enact the experience of being a wife in the family. Since all the learners share this experience and all of them are involved in re-enactment, learning occurs here through the twin steps of preparation and re-enactment.

This approach is particularly useful where learners share a somewhat similar experience and that experience or issue is difficult to recall because of its emotional valence. It can also be used where the possibility of recall of past experience is likely to be uneven among the learners. This use of re-enactment as role play is particularly apt for issues dealing with complex emotional and attitudinal aspects of learning.

This is the meaning of role play as a method of structured experience. The previous three meanings do not classify as a structured experience.

Obviously, the choice of a particular use of role play depends on the learning agenda, group of learners and trainer's capacity. But it is important to remember that the fourth type of use mentioned above – role play as a structured experience – implies learning from re-enactment of past experience which can be a powerful method if the focus of learning is awareness.

Of course, in which ever way role play is used, a discussion must follow to process the experience of either observation or re-enactment. This processing should follow the experiential learning cycle of debriefing explained earlier. It is important that facilitator helps the learner after completion of the role play to come out of their roles. The debriefing focuses on teasing out learning from the role play.

It must be remembered that real consolidation of learning through role play occurs through the steps of preparation, re-enactment, discussion, processing and analysis with generalisation to real life situation.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is energising</li> <li>• It helps the suppressed and illiterate to express their feelings</li> <li>• It is simple and low cost</li> <li>• It focuses on problems which are very real in nature</li> <li>• It presents complex issues simply and in a short while</li> <li>• It does not need material or advance preparation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a possibility of it becoming entertainment which vitiates learning</li> <li>• Participants can get too involved in their roles and later lose objectivity during analysis</li> <li>• Acting can become an end in itself and participants can overact or distort the roles</li> <li>• That the observers need to observe must be explained clearly or else the discussion which occurs later on the basis of this observation will be inadequate</li> </ul>

## Simulation

When learners need to become aware of something that they have not been very conscious of, when the situation involves complex interacting dynamics which can only be understood through an immediate 'hands on' experience, we use simulations. Simulation is a method based on 'here and now' experience shared by all the learners. It is done by assigning very definite roles to each participant and having them act out a situation according to the roles they have been given. It is carried on long enough to generate responses and reactions based on real feelings – participants need to genuinely 'get into their role', However, learning takes place without any serious risk because the situation is after all 'make believe'.

The original meaning of the method derives from the situation used to train aircraft pilots. since real life training is too risky. As any error during learning would prove total, conditions of real-life air and pressure are created inside a 'simulator' cockpit, and the pilot learns how to fly.

While use of simulations can result in very effective learning, it needs elaborate preparation and considerable trainer competence. The selection of simulations has to be done with great care keeping the level and background of the learners in mind It should not deal with something that is too close to their real life, otherwise they may not be able to deal with their feelings afterwards.

### Steps

#### *Pre-Simulation*

- Decide upon the objectives and design or select the appropriate simulation.
- Plan the debriefing in detail. Have a conceptual framework ready.

- Delineate the roles carefully and prepare role briefs and a list of rules/ instructions. Decide who will assume which roles. Try to include all learners as simulations should not have observers.
- Define the situations and events in which the characters will interact. There may be more than one situation/event.
- Decide upon where to have the simulation. The site/s chosen should parallel the real life sites of the situations chosen.
- Keep necessary props which may be used for the different roles ready at hand.

### *Conducting a Simulation*

- Assign roles, give each person the appropriate role brief. This role brief should include what type of person s/he is, including some details of personal history.
- Ask the participants to study their roles and try to 'become' the role.
- Do not let different roles study each other's brief.
- Have some appropriate means of identifying the different roles like name tags.
- Brief the participants about the situation and let them start acting according to their interpretation of the roles.
- Stop the simulation when appropriate, or the essential part is over, or if it is getting out of hand.

### *After the Simulation*

- Give the participants time to get out of their roles.
- Ask the participants to share their feelings, keep your questions directed and not vague; questions like—what happened to you during the simulation, how did you feel etc., can be asked.
- Note their responses (on a chart).
- Try to draw parallels with real life while analysing the patterns in the data.
- Collate these feelings, give necessary inputs and draw up a summary.

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows for explorations of very real life situations, social processes and behaviours in a relatively non-threatening way.</li> <li>• It allows for the study of very complex social processes.</li> <li>• It is entirely controlled by the learners' pace.</li> <li>• It involves activity and universal participation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It requires that participants cooperate and internalise the roles.</li> <li>• It is a difficult method and requires an experienced and skilled trainer to conduct it.</li> </ul>

## Learning Instruments

Learning Instruments are a kind of structured experience in which learners are given a particular printed format containing clear instructions and a series of questions, usually with multiple choices, or requiring brief replies. The questionnaire is filled in by participants either individually for themselves, or in twos/ threes for each other. At the end, instructions explain how to examine answers, assign scores and tally scores. The meanings of various different scores are also explained.

The purpose is to generate data about herself or himself for each learner. However, it is left to the learners to decide how to use this information about themselves. Thus, in terms of the experiential learning cycle, the steps of publishing, processing, generalising and applying are done individually by each participant and not collectively by the whole group.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be a very effective method for learning more about one's own self through systematic self-examination, reflection, and in cases feedback.</li> <li>• The learner does not feel external pressure or compulsion.</li> <li>• Learning takes place at the individual's own pace according to his or her interest and inclination.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can only be used with a group which is highly literate.</li> <li>• Needs a certain amount of honesty and genuine interest in the learner to generate meaningful data.</li> <li>• Works better with people who can learn intellectually at the level of abstractions.</li> <li>• It is difficult to design instruments.</li> </ul>

## Learning Games

Learning Games are those methods which are fun, involve some activity on the part of all participants and may seem trivial at first. It has a set of rules and regulations and may or may not include a competitive element. Games are usually employed to convey feelings and processes which are everyday in nature and are implied within the game being played, e.g., Trust games, Leadership games and so on. After the game is played, it is essential that the feelings of the participants be debriefed and consolidated.

### Uses

- To explain group processes
- To explain issues like trust, social relationships and so on

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is lively, fun and involves everyone's participation</li> <li>• Complex issues can be explained in a simple manner</li> <li>• It allows the participants to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding or designing appropriate games is not very easy</li> <li>• Games must be interactive, option providing and not directive (like simple dice games with messages)</li> </ul>

<p>experience the matter under consideration right there within the course of the training itself, (also called 'here- and-now' experience)</p>	<p>on the designated squares)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The focus of the game must be clear to the trainer or debriefing will be confused with entertainment without learning is not the objective.</li> </ul>
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## Ice Breakers

Ice breakers, activators or energisers are not true learning methods, but serve the purpose as their names suggest. They are non-threatening, fun activities, sometimes using physical movement to create an appropriate learning environment, help individuals to interact with each other, create a group feeling and so on. Games, songs, physical exercises can be used for this purpose. They help in introducing participants to each other, set the tone of the training, break monotony, shift from one content area to another and so on.

## Role of the Trainer in Structured Experiences

The trainer has a number of roles and responsibilities when conducting a session which uses structured experiences as the basis of the learning cycle.

1. *Choosing the appropriate method:* When there are possibilities that the learner group will have adequate experiences within itself on the particular subject, and will not feel hesitant to share, it is best to use their own experiences. When the possibilities of the learner group having adequate experiences or feeling adequately secure in sharing those experiences are not assured, it is best to use others' experiences, in the most appropriate code. If the experiences or feeling that needs to be generated is inherent in a complex social situation then a simulation could be used or if it is one which is simpler, games may be used, and so on.
2. *Preparation:* Having chosen the appropriate method viz. case study, role-play etc. the trainer has to keep the material prepared and ready to use. In the case of pictures, it might mean choosing or getting the appropriate pictures painted, for a role play it might mean identifying story/theme for the script, for a case study it might mean identifying the proper case and getting copies made, and so on.
3. *Briefing about the task:* The task at hand, i.e., what the group has to share, notice, discuss and deliberate and analyse is made clear to the group. If the group is literate, this can be clarified by writing on the chart or board. Necessary procedures for recording and reporting are also made clear and time limits set.

4. *Dividing into groups<sup>2</sup>*: It may be necessary to divide the larger group into smaller groups for more effective sharing and analysis. Even if the trainer is not directly responsible for dividing the learners into groups, it is his/her responsibility to see that such groupings are made.
5. *Maintaining Control*: Though this might sound authoritarian, the trainer needs to maintain some degree of control over processes like simulations, role plays and games, in order that effective learning can take place.
6. *Monitoring the discussion*: While the small groups are engaged in discussion the trainers should keep a constant watch over the group for such mundane matters like whether order is maintained and for more important things like whether the talk is clear, whether the discussions are on track etc.
7. *Debriefing*: Debriefing is the process of getting out from the groups or individuals the sum and substance of what they discussed or felt (details are given later).
8. *Consolidating and summarising*: The various reports and debriefs should be summarised before the group and various patterns and strands drawn out to put the information into an intelligible framework. Often it may be necessary for the trainer to contribute something on his/her own.
9. *Providing inputs*: Participatory training does not preclude the trainer from being a subject matter specialist. It is not mandatory to summarise only on the basis of the inputs received from the learners themselves. It is the trainer's duty to provide necessary information which the learners might not know or not be aware of.

## Debriefing and consolidation

An experiential learning situation must necessarily be followed by debriefing and consolidation. If the learners have gone through a moderate to intense emotional experience, it is necessary to allow them some time to get out of that emotional framework, otherwise they can get too involved and carried away. Debriefing consists of getting from the learner or learner group their feelings, emotions, experiences and whatever else the trainer might feel necessary. The debriefed information must be noted down publicly to relate it with learning in real life situations. To reiterate, the debriefed information needs to be put into a real life context, so that people can relate to it in a broader framework. The trainer must provoke analysis on the information presented, enabling the derivation of broad

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<sup>2</sup> Random: If larger group is divided into three groups, the group can start by calling one, two, and three in order of sitting. It should start from one corner. Likewise, if more groups are to be formed, then the number could go till four to six.

Specific: In certain groups, it is important to divide the groups to include different parameters such as work experience, age, and thematic areas to bring in more diversity to the group learning process.

principles. Wherever necessary the trainer must provide additional information for the learners to arrive at the broad principles.

### Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework is the broad theoretical framework that the trainer follows when choosing the content area. The conceptual framework relates to the learning objectives and the content area. It forms the basis for the debriefing and the analysis. Without suggesting manipulation, the objective of the trainer is to put the debriefed information into this theoretical framework after analysis and additional information. It is essential that it be situated in/related to real life.

### A scheme for questioning

1. What did you see? How did you feel? What did you say during discussions? *These questions help in bring out the participant's perceptions and experiences. The information gathered is noted down on a board or chart paper.*
2. Why did you feel the way you did? Why did you say what you did during the discussions? *These questions enable participants to analyse the reasons and causes behind their behaviour, perceptions, experiences.*
3. Do such situations occur in real life? When? Has it happened to you? *Questions like these try to situate the experience in reality and try to draw parallels with life.*
4. Why do you think this happens? *This is an attempt to analyse and draw principles and conclusions which form the core of the new learning. It may be necessary at this point to provide additional information.*

### Video review

Video may be used in a training in a number of ways. The most common way is to show a film for the purpose of giving new information to the learners. A different way of using video is using it for reviewing practice or behaviour.

### Uses

- for conveying knowledge about something
- for purposes of awareness raising about self and group
- for enhancing skills by reviewing practice

### Steps

- Make a contract with the learners explaining that video is going to be used and their behaviour is going to be recorded. It must be made clear that it is only going to be used for learning and is going to be treated confidentially. It will not be shown to anyone outside the group and will not be used against them.

- Record on video the elements that you would like to focus their interest on ego, communication patterns, non-verbal messages aspects of behaviour etc.
- Be as unobtrusive as possible when recording so that learners do not become self-conscious and alter their spontaneous behaviour.
- Show the recording to the learners at an appropriate time drawing attention to the points you would like to highlight.
- During the show do not criticise subjectively or be evaluative.
- Ask the learners to focus on their own behaviour according to the guidelines you have provided and not on how they or their friends appear on the screen.
- When showing the video make sure that no outsiders are present, respect the contract.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a very powerful tool for learning about oneself and about a group because it is factual and objective and confronts the learners with hard evidence</li> <li>• It uses experiences, behaviour and situations generated in the course of the training, which are real and cannot be dismissed as contrived</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It may not be possible to apply this tool universally because of unavailability of video cameras</li> <li>• Learners might tend to focus on their looks and appearances</li> <li>• Learners can become very threatened or affected and withdraw into shells, or break down</li> <li>• Skill needs to be acquired by trainers in operating video cameras</li> <li>• It requires meticulous planning and preparation</li> </ul>

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*This section has been adapted from “A Manual for Participatory Training Methodology in Development”, Sixth Edition 2011, published by Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), India.*

# UNDERSTANDING SELF USING TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

## Introduction

What is the “self”? Self can be called the combination of our knowledge, intellect, values and attitudes – the conscious and unconscious. There are a number of frameworks for understanding the self. Over the last hundred years or so a process of scientific enquiry into the self has begun, but even then our knowledge is far from complete. Since our action or behaviours is the only observable part of our self, scientists have focussed largely on this and on personality as manifestation of self.

Developing soft skills through participatory training is concerned with relationships with the way people behave with one another, with the motive forces behind behaviour, and with the means of bringing about fundamental changes in behaviour.

It is generally agreed that the self has three broad aspects. These three constantly interact with each other causing congruence or confusion depending on whether they are in harmony or not.

**The cognitive self:** This refers to our mental or intellectual capacities, our ability to store and process information, our memory and logical abilities. In some individuals this aspect is highly developed and in others it is not. A culture with its emphasis on formal schooling encourages the development of the cognitive aspects.

**The affective self:** This refers to our emotional side, our capacity to feel and express emotions. The development of our affective self has its roots in our childhood experiences of being loved, held or hugged. The immediate family people who lay more emphasis on their cognitive self tend to look down upon those who are more impulsive, emotional, and possess artistic talent. Our dominant culture dictates that a good memory for facts is more important than creativity.

**The behavioural self:** A common assumption is that knowing intellectually about something will automatically lead to appropriate change in behaviour. In reality, most of our behaviour is moulded by our emotions and beliefs. Learning which occurs on the cognitive level is not as effective in changing behaviour as learning which occurs on the emotional or affective level. Ultimately the belief dictates our behaviour.

## What is Transactional Analysis (TA)?

Eric Berne, an American psychiatrist, in 1958 formulated his own theory based on his clinical experience and coined the word Transactional Analysis - popularly known as TA.

- Transactional Analysis is a theory of personality and behaviour and a systematic tool for personal growth and personal change.
- Transactional Analysis gives us a picture of how people are structured psychologically.
- Transactional Analysis also provides a theory of communication.
- Transactional Analysis offers a theory of child development – the concept of life script explains how our present life patterns originated in childhood.

### Philosophy of Transactional Analysis

- All individuals are born OK, as princes and princesses.
- All individuals have the capacity to think except the severely brain damaged.
- All individuals decide their own destiny and these decisions can be changed.

### Structural analysis of Ego states

Ego state is a consistent pattern of feeling and experience directly related to a corresponding consistent pattern of behaviour.



The **Parent** ego state is the set of feelings, attitudes, values and prejudices and behaviours introjected from parents and significant parental figures.



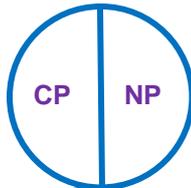
The **Adult** ego state is those feelings, attitudes, behaviours related to current here-and-now reality.



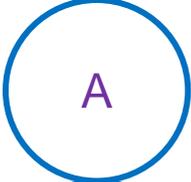
The **Child** ego state is the archaic feelings, emotions, attitudes, and behaviours, which are remnants of the person's past.

### The functional model of Ego states

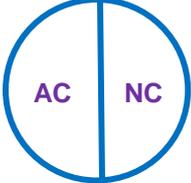
Functionally the Parent (P) ego state manifests as Critical Parent (CP) and Nurturing Parent (NP); Child (C) ego state manifests as Adapted Child (AC), and Natural Child (NC).



While in **Critical Parent** people manifest themselves as disappointed, aggrieved, feeling always right, patronising, controlling, critical, putting down others, as **Nurturing Parent**, people act loving, caring, concerned, understanding etc.



From **Adult** we function as a computer, process data, organise information, estimate probabilities, make logical statements, and provide non-judgmental feedback.



When we are in our **Natural Child**, we tend to laugh, share fun, feel excited and enthusiastic, and express our anger, sadness and fear freely without any inhibition. In **Adapted Child**, we exhibit behaviour of rebellion or compliance.

As explained earlier, the foundation of developing soft skills is embedded in the person's ability to first understand and effectively change her/his own behaviour. In this chapter we will focus on three tools for self analysis: Egogram, Strokes and Life Positions. A short description for each tool is given below:

### Egogram

The Egogram is a relationship diagram, depicting the amount of energy a person uses externally, or actively, as one relates to others. It is a bar chart representing the person's entire personality. It is drawn as a way of providing feedback to someone regarding how others experience him or her. Egogram is based on constancy hypothesis, which states that the amount of psychic energy within a person remains constant. For example, if a person starts to increase the energy in his Natural Child, there will be lesser energy available for his other ego states.

### Strokes

*Definition of strokes:* A stroke is defined as a unit of recognition.

*Stimulation and recognition hunger:* There are various hungers, which human beings have. Physiological hungers are satisfied by food, water, etc. Psychological hunger could be for stimulus or structure. One such psychological hunger is the need for physical and mental stimulation. While young we need physical touch. As we grow this is substituted by other forms of recognition. This is defined as recognition hunger. Strokes help us satisfy this hunger for stimulus and recognition.

*Types of strokes:* Strokes are of different kinds.

- Verbal or Non-verbal
- Positive or Negative
- Conditional or Unconditional.

Any transaction is an exchange of strokes. No communication is possible without non-verbal strokes. Positive strokes invite us to feel OK about others, and ourselves while Negative strokes invite us to feel not OK about ourselves, about others or both. A negative stroke is better than no stroke.

Conditional strokes are for something the person does (for “doing”), whereas Unconditional strokes are for what the person is (the “being”). There can be positive conditional (e.g. “This is a good piece of embroidery”) or negative conditional (e.g. “I don’t like the way you stitch”). Or it could be positive unconditional (e.g. “You are great”) or negative unconditional (e.g. “I hate you”).

Stroking reinforces behaviour, be it positive or negative.

### Life Position

Depending on the experience and messages the child encounters with, each child takes one of the four life positions. This is called the basic life position. Life positions are psychological senses regarding self, others and life, which the person takes. These also determine the person’s attitudes and perceptions.

1. **I’m Ok, You’re OK:** All are born in this position. This is the potentially healthy position. Persons in this position are realistic; not threatened of their shortcomings. Even when they have reverses they get up and go ahead with the business of life. Their basic operation is “Get-On-With”.
2. **I’m OK, You’re not OK:** People in this position feel they are victims of circumstances. Predominant feeling is anger. They are blamers. Such people are stroked only conditionally as children. Their basic operation is “Get-Rid-Of”.
3. **I’m not OK, You’re OK:** People in this position feel inferior and powerless when they compare themselves with others. They are shy and withdrawn and quite often pessimistic. Predominant feeling is sadness. Basic operation is “Get-Away-From”.
4. **I’m not OK, You’re not OK:** Futile position. People in this position lose interest in living. A hopeless position. Their parents were never pleased with them for anything. Basic operation is “Get-Nowhere-With”.

# EGOGRAM AND LIFE POSITIONS QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire has been developed to help you understand your behaviour and personal patterns – the hallmark for personal growth and developing soft skills. Please declare which statement fits best at this present moment. It will be most helpful to you the more open and honest you can be with yourself. Please use the following numbers to describe your answer:

*4 = this statement fits extremely well*

*3 = this statement fits well*

*2 = this statement fits sometimes*

*1 = this statement fits hardly ever*

*0 = this statement doesn't fit at all*

1.	I find it easy to assert myself.	
2.	I'm very sympathetic when people come to me with their problems.	
3.	My course of action when solving problems is more logical than intuitive.	
4.	I see myself as an impulsive human being.	
5.	I feel inhibited more often than I would like to.	
6.	I think it is important to respect traditions.	
7.	It gives me a huge satisfaction to consider other people's needs.	
8.	I usually keep my cool and stay business like when confronted with atypical situations.	
9.	I tend to fulfil my desires as quickly as possible.	
10.	I rather agree with somebody else than to get into an endless discussion.	
11.	I get angry about people who challenge recognised and accepted ways of thinking and behaviour.	
12.	I'm a forgiving person.	
13.	In all I do, I try to do it as perfectly as possible.	
14.	I'm a fun-loving person.	
15.	I often try to find out what other people expect of me so that I can comply accordingly.	
16.	I take leadership in critical situations because I know from experience what will work in such circumstances.	
17.	I strongly believe that all human beings are basically OK.	
18.	I analyse facts before I make a decision.	
19.	I have more interests and hobbies than the average person.	
20.	I believe that at the end of the day it's best to obey the authority.	
21.	I believe that society would benefit from a harsher punishment for any violations.	

22.	I find it very satisfying to help others to develop their potential and growth.	
23.	It seems that I developed the ability to think and act independently rather than to conform to other people's views.	
24.	I'm imaginative and I have lots of good ideas.	
25.	It seems that I pity myself more than others.	
26.	I have fairly clear ideas about what is right and what is wrong.	
27.	I often find myself in the role of consoling others.	
28.	I keep cool when others would either feel agitated or would switch off.	
29.	I'm rather spontaneous and I don't hesitate.	
30.	I try not to show feelings even when I'm very hurt inside.	
31.	I don't like to show my weaknesses to others.	
32.	I often get asked for advice.	
33.	My aim is to be objective.	
34.	I'm a curious person and I like to try out new things.	
35.	I find it hard to ask for something I need.	
36.	Once I've made up my mind I don't like to change it.	
37.	When I see that somebody has trouble with their tasks then I'm happy to ease their workload.	
38.	Whenever I work I'd like to do it thoroughly.	
39.	I'm frank with people. I say what I think and feel.	
40.	I feel that I can't cope on my own in many situations.	
41.	I am often surprised to see how stupid people are.	
42.	I enjoy helping others to get out of difficult situations.	
43.	I have a very good ability to explain things to people in a clear and accurate manner.	
44.	I find it hard to understand why so many people take life so seriously.	
45.	I continuously try to comply with what other people expect of me.	
46.	I do my day-to-day work in a routine rather than to try out new and inventive ways.	
47.	I feel exploited by others.	
48.	When having discussions my point of views rank amongst the best.	
49.	Patience is not my biggest strength.	
50.	If somebody is angry with me I try to conciliate with him/her.	
51.	I see myself as being confident.	
52.	I'm able to solve problems/tasks as well as other people would do.	
53.	I'd like to describe myself as being a fairly optimistic human being.	
54.	I know that I have many good qualities and skills.	
55.	I feel comfortable with myself.	
56.	I have little self-confidence.	
57.	I haven't achieved much in my life that I feel really proud of.	

58.	At times I think that I'm not good enough.	
59.	At times I feel useless.	
60.	In many situations I feel inferior to other people.	
61.	I really get on with everybody.	
62.	I especially feel comfortable with people who have other views than mine.	
63.	I consider it to be especially important what other people feel and think.	
64.	I believe it to be worthwhile to be open and honest towards others.	
65.	I sincerely believe that human beings are well able to lead and control themselves so that they can develop further.	
66.	I noticed that in conflict situations I tend to be right after all.	
67.	If I'm honest to myself I can see that I do criticise others more than that I praise them.	
68.	I quickly discover other people's weak points.	
69.	My experience is that when I give someone an inch they will take a mile.	
70.	I believe that human beings really need a strong and leading hand.	

## EGOGRAM: YOUR PERSONALITY PROFILE

	CP		NP		A		NC		AC
1		2		3		4		5	
6		7		8		9		10	
11		12		13		14		15	
16		17		18		19		20	
21		22		23		24		25	
26		27		28		29		30	
31		32		33		34		35	
36		37		38		39		40	
41		42		43		44		45	
46		47		48		49		50	
<b>Total</b>		<b>Total</b>		<b>Total</b>		<b>Total</b>		<b>Total</b>	

## LIFE POSITIONS: HOW YOU APPRECIATE YOURSELF AND OTHERS

	I am OK		I'm not OK		You're OK		You're not OK
51		56		61		66	
52		57		62		67	
53		58		63		68	
54		59		64		69	
55		60		65		70	
<b>Total</b>		<b>Total</b>		<b>Total</b>		<b>Total</b>	

After completing the Egogram and Life Positions Questionnaire, ask the participants to transfer the scores to the tables above.

Explain that Egogram depicts the score for five aspects of one's personality: CP = Critical Parent, NP = Nurturing Parent, A = Adult, NC = Natural Child, and AC = Adapted Child. The highest possible score for each of these five aspects is 40 (maximum score for each statement – 4 x number of questions – 10). Higher the score, stronger the particular Ego state.

Explain that Life Positions depicts how you appreciate yourself and others. The highest possible score for each of these basic four Life Positions is 20 (maximum score for each statement – 4 x number of question – 5). Higher the score, stronger the particular Life Position.

# UNDERSTANDING TEAM AND TEAM BUILDING

## “BROKEN SQUARE” EXERCISE

**Objective** : The “Broken Square” activity and discussion will help participants understand and discover the critical processes of team building.

**Time required** : 120 minutes

**Materials and training aids** :

- Flip charts, markers, and paper tape
- Cardboards and scissors for making broken squares
- Enough broken square envelope for each participant
- One set of “Observer Instructions” for each small group (optional)
- Presentation slides, LCD projector, and Computer

**Learning method** : Short lecture, Group exercise, Debriefing and Consolidation

**Preparation** : Directions for making a set of squares

A set consists of five envelopes containing pieces of cardboard which have been cut into different patterns and which, when properly arranged, will form five squares of equal size. One set should be provided for each group of five persons. *Please see drawings on page 41 for preparing squares with various pieces.*

To prepare a set, cut out five cardboard squares of equal size, approximately six-by-six inches. Place the squares in a row and mark them as below, pencilling the letters, a, b, c, etc., lightly so that they can be erased later.

The lines should be so drawn that when cut out, all pieces marked "a" will be of exactly the same size, all pieces marked "c" of the same size, etc. By using multiples of three inches, several combinations will be possible that will enable participants to form one or two squares, but only one combination is possible that will form five squares 15 x 15 centimetres.

After drawing the lines on the six-by-six inch squares and labelling them with lower case letters, cut each square as marked into smaller pieces to make the parts of the puzzle.

Mark the five envelopes A, B, C, D, and E. Distribute the cardboard pieces in the five envelopes as follows:

Envelope	A has pieces	i, h, e
	B has pieces	a, a, a, c
	C has pieces	a, j
	D has pieces	d, f
	E has pieces	g, b, f, c

Erase the pencilled letter from each piece and write, instead the appropriate envelope letter. This will make it easy to return the pieces to the proper envelope for subsequent use when a group has completed the task.

**Activity 1** : Time (45 minutes)

**1.1** Divide participants into groups of five by "numbering off".

*Depending on the number of participants, "extra participants" left after the groups of five are formed can (1) be observers for the group (give them a copy of the Observer Instructions), (2) form a smaller group of three or four (you will have to remove the pieces from their packets for the unrequired squares), or (3) divide among the other groups to make a few groups of six (you will have to give those groups pieces for additional squares and have them mix up and re-allocate 3 pieces per person).*

**1.2** : Direct the group not to begin until after you have finished reading the instructions.

**1.3** : Read the following instructions out loud:

- In each envelope there are five sets of puzzle pieces. Your group has enough pieces to make five identical sized squares.
- The task will not be completed until each individual in the group has before them a perfect square of the same size as that held by others.
- Specific limitations are imposed during this

exercise:

- No member may speak.
- No member may ask another member for a piece or in any way signal that another person is to give them a piece.
- No member may take a piece from another member.
- Members are not allowed to put other member's puzzle together.
- Members may give their pieces to other members, but not place those pieces in another member's puzzle. They must simply hand the piece to another member.

*You may like to prepare presentation slides in advance for these instructions.*

**Activity 2** : Time (30 minutes)

**2.1** : Lead a debriefing discussion by using the following suggested questions.

- How did you feel during the exercise? Why?
- How many were frustrated? Why? How did you solve the communication challenges?
- Was there any critical point at which the group started to cooperate? What was the cause?
- What was the only way to be able to complete this activity? You had to be willing to give your pieces away. Why was that significant?
- What are some principles for successful team cooperation?

**Activity 3** : Time (15 minutes)

**3.1** : Make a short presentation on Understanding Team and Team Building

**Activity 4** : Time 30 minutes

**4.1** : Allow participants to ask questions and comments related to Team Building

**4.2** : Facilitate a Question and Answer (Q&A) session

**4.3** : Conclude the session by thanking everyone

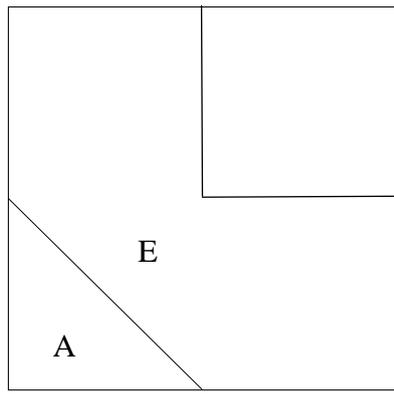
## Observer Instructions

Your job is part observer and part judge. Make sure each participant observes the following rules while playing the game.

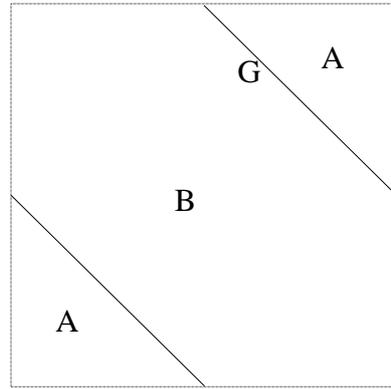
- No talking or pointing.
- Participants may give pieces to others but may not take pieces from other members.
- Participants may not simply throw their pieces into the centre for others to take; they have to give the pieces directly to one individual at a time.
- No participant may work on puzzle in front of other team members.
- It is permissible for a member to give away all the pieces to his square, even if he has already formed a square.

Observations: As an observer, please record the following observations on this paper. You may record the names of individuals in your group who identify with a particular question. The participants are not to see these questions.

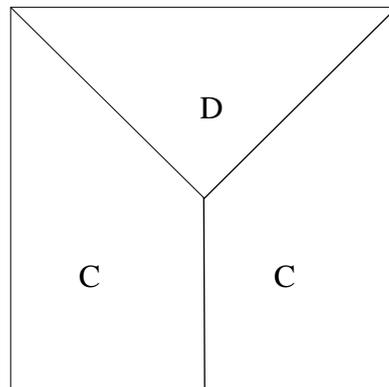
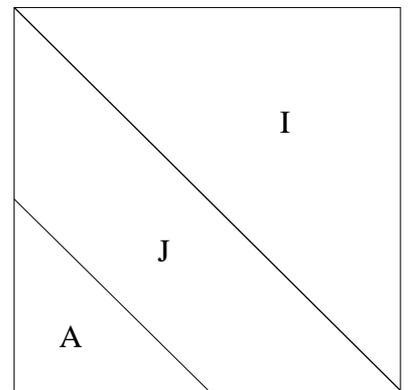
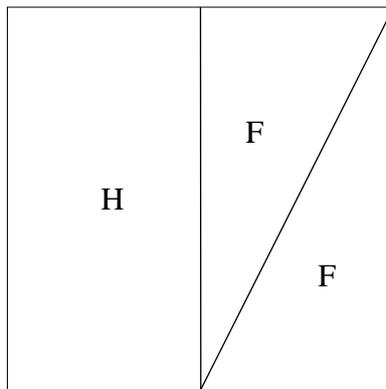
- Who is willing to give away pieces of the puzzle?
- Did anyone finish their puzzle but was unwilling to give any of their pieces away?
- How many people are actively engaged in mentally putting the pieces together?
- Periodically check the level of frustration or anxiety--who's pulling their hair out?
- Was there any crucial turning point at which time the group began to cooperate?
- Did anyone "mentally drop out" when they had completed their square?
- Did anyone try to violate the rules by talking or pointing as a means of helping fellow members solve their puzzle?



6"



6"



## Reading on

# TEAM AND TEAM BUILDING

A team is a set of interpersonal relationships structured to achieve established goals. As such, successful team performance requires use of interpersonal competencies among the team members. The productivity of teams is not a simple function of team member's technical competencies and task abilities. Small groups of motivated individuals are the secret to team productivity.

A team is two or more individuals, including duly constituted leadership, working in concert, engaged in clearly understood interdependent roles, towards achievement of mutually shared tasks. "Leadership", "Task", and "Role" are, thus the core ingredients of a "Team". These concepts – among others – need to be understood and operationalised effectively in order for a team to come into being, and stay as a tool for the organisation.

Human beings are born individuals with strong survival instincts. Physiological survival takes the form of a level of personal comfort, freedom from pain and disease, and of course avoidance of death. Psychological survival, in due course, may begin to mean things like respect from others, recognition, and self esteem. These motives would seem familiar in terms of our ability to compete and achieve, repel potential danger, and build a social system conducive to our individual safety, security and support needs; but it rarely becomes a source of sustained mutuality.

**Team work therefore, has often to be learnt:** Learning team-work may not necessarily mean learning any new skills. It may, though mean learning how to apply the skills we possess to team situations such that rather than threatening, the team is seen as an instrument to preserve our individuality and survival. Unfortunately, in most cases, our normal learning process is not conducive to developing this attitude. The learning, therefore, has to be attitudinal and motivational rather than knowledge and skills oriented. Most of our early learning takes place in the family and in formal education. Neither of these adequately stresses the need for us to become good team players.

**Most organisational tasks are accomplished by teams:** Organisations use teams for specific missions and the more effective leaders like to turn their people into teams. Teams are created to pool the talent, energy, and initiative of several persons so that this group of persons can achieve what may be very difficult for any individual to achieve alone. Creative team work is important in any organisation not only because it helps to achieve organisational objective but also because it is a powerful means of developing and motivating human resources.

A team which works smoothly or harmoniously does not necessarily contribute to organisational effectiveness and innovation. The following may act as useful indicators of danger in team functioning:

- ▶ A hazard of cohesive team working is “group think” – a situation in which the ideology of the team clouds the capacity of team members to think and act rationally about the task, particularly when the team is under pressure.
- ▶ Another hazard is that individuals may consciously conform to the norms as dictates of the group even when these violate their own notion of right and wrong. For instance, members of a management team may collectively decide to launch a programme which is known to be unproven or risky simply because no one wants to spoil the team spirit.

### Features of effective creative teams

Creative functional teams that contribute to organisational effectiveness are known to manifest some of all the following features:

**Participatory leadership:** Leadership is not just the style, skills and competencies of the leader, but also the systems and processes through which leadership is institutionalised in the organisation, and experienced by the followers. Some examples of the institutionalising mechanisms can be the organisational values, and the systems devised for organisational processes such as, leader-follower mutuality and thrust, motivation, communication, influencing, decision-making, goal-setting, control, performance management.

The leader needs not necessarily be personally very creative; but it is important that she/he respects and understands creativity and regards the nurturance and evocation of creativity in her/his team members as one of his/her main tasks. She/he must delegate sizable powers to team members, encourage initiative, and provide sense of security to creative members using innovative approaches that may or may not eventually work. The leader may also help the team by encouraging a system, in which relatively young or inexperienced members (progenies) are informally attached to mature innovators (mentors) to learn the ropes. Role modelling within limits seems to play a major role in creativity. Participatory leadership means creating an interdependency by empowering, freeing up, and serving others. The atmosphere tends to be informal, comfortable, relaxed. The leadership shifts from time to time, depending on the circumstances. There is little evidence of a struggle for power as the team operates.

**Shared responsibility:** Shared responsibility must accompany participatory leadership. This involves establishing an environment in which all team members feel as responsible as the leader for the performance of the work unit.

**Aligned on purpose:** All members have a sense of common purpose about why the team exists and the function it serves. The task or the objective of the team is well understood and accepted by the members. There would have been free discussion of the objective at some point, until it was formulated in such a way that the members of the group could commit themselves to it.

**High communication:** This involves existence of a climate of trust, and open honest communication. The team has lots of discussion, in which almost everyone participates, but it remains pertinent to the task. If the discussion gets off the subject, someone will bring it back. Face-to-face interaction has considerable impact on morale, and effectiveness. To obtain meaningful face-to-face interaction, team size needs to be small. A perception that one's participation and efforts are needed increases as the size of the team decreases.

**Future focussed:** Creative effective teams concern themselves not only with the present, but also with future of the organisation. Accordingly, they see change as an opportunity for growth. Rapid response to environment, and identifying and acting on opportunities is an essential characteristic of creative teams.

**Focussed on task:** Task includes the mission, the strategy, the programmes etc. of the organisation, in ways and forms entrusted to a team. Unless this task is appropriately determined and defined to clear and identical understanding of all members, including the expected quantity, quality, time-schedule, resources available – financial, human, and others, there can be no team. Focused on task means keeping operations focused on results, and sharing responsibility for the operations. The team is self-conscious about its own operations.

**Structures, roles and rules:** A team's work consists of routine or repetitive tasks, as well as non-routine and emergency or urgent tasks. It makes sense to develop some sort of a structure – it needs not be a tight one – to take care of both sorts of tasks. Thus, some division of work, specialisation, and delineation of responsibilities helps ensure that all the needed work gets done. Some rules are also useful to have in order to avoid needless conflicts; and some procedures for repetitive tasks may be usefully laid down to minimise members "rediscovering the wheel". A number of roles may need to be played for a team to perform well.

However, the roles of team members are not defined only in aid of the routine tasks; these are only minimum elements of their roles. Some role ambiguity to accommodate the situational compulsions helps interaction. Periodic interchange of roles within the team can help develop this versatility.

In an effective team, clear assignments are made and accepted. Individual accountability is an important aspect of role clarity. It becomes visible when the performance of each individual team member is assessed to (a) inform the team which members need more assistance or encouragement in completing their assigned work; and (b) increase members' awareness that their contributions to the team effort are identifiable.

**Shared values:** Teams work well when members share in ideology. An ideology consists of connected values. The point is that when members share certain core values, teamwork is facilitated, and members are likely to put their heart and soul into the team's work. Some shared ideologies help a team operates more innovatively: curiosity, sensitivity, entrepreneurship, complexity, independence, reality contact, experimentation, persistent striving for distant goals. These values are consistent with a democratic idealistic value system.

**Creative talents, skills and resources:** Since teams often pursue tasks that are bigger than what any one person acting alone can pursue, it stands to reason that a team must have a fairly wide spectrum of expertise, skills and abilities, and also an access to other types of resources – money, equipment, technical skills, authority to act, and so forth.

Creative talents refer to those personal attributes of individual members that help remove barriers to creativity, and enable creative application of individual talents and skills.

Collaborative skills need a special mention in this context. Teams function effectively if members do have and use the needed collaborative skills. Placing socially unskilled individuals in a team and telling them to collaborate does not guarantee that they required to work as part of teams and, therefore, lack proficiency in the needed collaborative skills for doing so. Persons must be helped in acquiring proficiency in social skills for high-quality collaboration and be motivated to use them. All the small-group skills are relevant to team effectiveness.

**Tolerance or dissent:** The team is comfortable with disagreement and shows no signs of having to avoid conflict or to keep everything on a plane of sweetness and light. Disagreements are not suppressed or overridden by premature team action. The reasons are carefully examined, and the team seeks to resolve them rather than to dominate the dissenter.

**Decision by consensus:** Most decisions are reached by a kind of consensus in which it is clear that everybody is in general agreement and willing to go along. However, there is little tendency for individuals who oppose the action to keep their opposition private and thus let an apparent consensus mask real disagreement. Formal voting is at a minimum; the team does not accept a simple majority as a proper basis for action.

**Constructive criticism:** Criticism is frequent, frank, and relatively comfortable. There is little evidence of personal attack, either openly or in a hidden fashion. The criticism has a constructive flavour in that it is oriented toward removing an obstacle that faces the team and prevents it from getting the job done.

**Respect for feelings:** People are free in expressing their feelings as well as their ideas both on the problem and on the team's operation. There is little pussyfooting, there are few "hidden agendas". Everybody appears to know quite well how everybody else feels about any matter under discussion.

**Positive interdependence:** Positive interdependence is the perception that the performance of the team is mutually caused by all members; that one is linked with others in a way that one cannot succeed unless these others do. A belief that "you one cannot succeed unless these others do. A belief that "you sink or swim together". Positive interdependence promotes working together to maximise

joint benefits, sharing resources, providing mutual support, and celebrating joint success.

This positive interdependence may include positive goal interdependence, positive reward interdependence where joint reward is given for successful team work, positive role interdependence where team members are assigned complementary and interconnected roles, positive task interdependence where division of labour is such that the actions of one member have to be completed if the next member is to complete his/her responsibilities, positive resource interdependence where each member has only a portion of the resources (information or material) necessary for the task to be completed.

**Group processing:** Teams that reflect on their internal processes, instead of concentrating only on task achievement, are likely to be more effective in the long run. Thus, a team that periodically reviews the processes of communication, conformity and deviance, leadership and followership, and value and norm formation is likely to remain healthy and energetic. To make the team function innovatively, the process of problem solving and decision making also needs to be reviewed periodically.

## Evolution of teams

Establishing a high-performance team is a developmental evolutionary process. A work unit must go through several phases of growth and change to become a high-performance team. As teams become increasingly effective, the characteristics they display and the procedures they adopt also change. Even where teams have not tried consciously to improve their methods of operation and effectiveness there can be tremendous differences, but where serious efforts are made to improve these things, observers have noted that there are common characteristics which tend to be exhibited according to the stage of development. Before exhibiting the signs of effective teamwork, often a team will need to pass through several stages of development during which other signs or characteristics will be exhibited.

Some patterns around the stages that characterise transformation of aggregation of people into teams have been observed and described by different researchers. Two of these patterns are described below:

### First pattern – Three phases of team development

This pattern looks at the process of team formation in three phases: but all groups are not alike. Each passes through the phases at different rates and exhibits different patterns of interactions at each phase.

**Phase 1 – Collection of individuals:** When people are asked to work together, they initially form a collectives of individuals. This phase gives individuals the opportunity to form identities within the work unit. Phase 1 teams tend to be individual-centred, have individual goals rather than group goals, do not share responsibility, avoid changes, and prefer to suppress conflict. Members begin to

define their purpose and responsibilities, identify the skills of other members, and develop norms for working with one another.

**Phase 2 – Groups:** In the second developmental phase, work units begin forming groups. Members develop a group identity, define their roles, clarify their purpose, and establish norms for working together. However, groups tend to be leader-centred; the leader provides direction, assigns tasks, reviews performance, and is the primary focus of communication.

**Phase 3 – Performing team:** The final phase and a difficult to attain, is that of an actual high-performance team, a team able to focus energy, and rewards. Teams are purpose-centred; members not only understand the purpose but are committed to it and use the purpose to guide actions and decisions.

### Second pattern - Four stages of team development

This pattern looks at team development in four stages. Many managers have found this useful.

**Stage 1 – The undeveloped team:** Most groups in organisations manifest characteristics of this stage. Such groups abound wherever people have come together to complete a task but have devoted little time to considering how they should operate. A stage, feelings are not dealt with because these are seen as appropriate to one's private life with the workplace being for work. People conform to the established line, often because that is the way in which things have always been done and sometimes because they are too scared to suggest changes. Even constructive ideas about change are not welcomed and people usually learn that it is safer not to "rock the boat" by making unwanted suggestions. Leadership is seldom challenged. Little care is shown for other people or their views, characterised by a lot of talking and little of listening. Meeting tend to comprise mainly of people put their own points of view without listening to what has gone before or after. Personal weaknesses are covered up because the group lacks the skill to support or to eliminate them. Mistakes are frequently covered up by individuals knowing that they will be seen as failures. Mistakes are used as evidence to convict people rather than as opportunities to learn and improve. There is little shared understanding between the leader and the group members as to what needs to be done. Where there is clarity this is often because clear instructions have come from the top rather than because the members have shared in the determination of plans. Outside threats are met by defensiveness, increased bureaucracy, paperwork and rules. People confine themselves to their own defined jobs and the boss takes most of the decisions.

Many apparently effective teams show these characteristics; but it works only if the boss has the wisdom, energy and time to make all the decisions. This is not real teamwork as it does not capitalise on the dormant strengths of the team. Sometimes this stage is referred to as the 'king and court' stage because the team resembles the old concept of the 'court' who would never dare challenge assignment of their 'king'.

**Stage 2: The experimenting team:** The team decides that it wants seriously to review its operating methods and undertake activities which will improve its performance. The team becomes willing to experiment; to sail in what, for them, are uncharted waters, and face the ensuing opportunities and dangers. Problems are faced more openly and wider options are considered before decisions are taken. Where necessary, the underlying values and beliefs affecting decisions are going to be debated, which may lead to temporary feelings of insecurity and high risks. As riskier issues are opened up, hitherto taboo topics begin to be discussed; and, often, the way in which the team is managed is one of the first issues examined. More personal issues are raised, feelings begin to be considered and personal animosities begin to be dealt with. People begin to say things which they may have wanted to monitor for years. This can obviously lead to some traumatic encounters between team members but they quickly learn that when the dirt has been put on the table and examined, the team becomes a healthier and happier place to be. The group becomes more inward looking and for a time may even reject other groups and individuals. This is a transient phase, and comes about because the team has become keenly interested in and obsessed with its own problems and new horizons that it just wants to work on them, and sees that as the most important thing to do. More concern is shown for the views and problems of colleagues with a consequent increase in real listening, and often for the first time, people begin to understand other members of the team. Meetings show more listening and thinking and less talking. In this stage, teams can often become uncomfortable, but they are also dynamic and exciting. The observer can see things coming to life and people who have been dormant for years start to really contribute. However, although the team has become more open and potentially more effective, it still lacks the capacity to act in an economic, unified and methodical way. It has worked on some of the interpersonal issues successfully but it has not yet put this learning to profitable use.

**Stage 3 – The consolidating team:** After the team has worked on the interpersonal issues at stage 2 and has begun to resolve them it will begin to have the confidence, open approach and trust to examine its operating methods. Generally, the team decides to adopt more systematic approach leading to clearer and more methodical way of working. The rules and procedure which characterised stage 1 now begin to be re-introduced, but this time these are not edicts from higher ups or historical precedents which have to be observed: they are the agreed operating rules of the team, which everyone has had a part in framing and to which everyone is committed. Even with the better relationships built in stage 2, the team quickly learns that ground-rules are still important. The most apparent evidence of this is the way in which decisions are taken, usually by:

- clarifying the purpose of the task or activity;
- establishing the objectives which need to be met;
- collecting the information which will be needed;
- considering the options which are open to the team;
- detailed planning of what needs to be done;
- reviewing the outcome and using it as a basis for improving future operations.

The improved relationships and more exciting methods experienced in Stage 2 are maintained but they are used to build the ground rules and working procedures which the team will use.

**Stage 4 – The mature team:** After Stage 3 has been worked through there is the basis for a really mature team. The openness, concern and improved relationships of Stage 2 and the systematic approach of Stage 3 can now be used to complete the task or building a really mature team. Flexibility becomes the keynote, with different procedures being adopted to meet different needs. People are not concerned with defending positions. Leadership is decided by the situation not protocol, the group itself recognising the kind of leadership which is necessary and the leader recognising the need to involve the team in matters of substance. Often formal management hierarchy is abandoned in favour of something which the team feels is more appropriate. Everyone's energies are utilised for the team, because individual commitment to team success exists. There is pride in the team and its achievements but this does not stifle individual initiative and achievement because everyone realises not only that it is part of a larger organisation but also that organisations have a moral and social responsibility. It begins to realise that it is a part of a big world and can help others as well. Development becomes an increasing priority because all realise that continued success depends on continued development. Trust, openness, honesty, cooperation and confrontation, and a continual review of results become part of the way of life. The desire to improve further means that external help is always welcome. The team is not only admired but is emulated and it is always willing to reach out and help other less mature teams. Above all, the team is a happy and rewarding place to be.

### Concluding words on team development

In addition to the other essential elements, effective teams need to be cohesive, to maintain trust among members, and to have norms that promote productivity. And, this requirement calls for special attention. Cohesion is the extent to which the influence on members to remain in the team is greater than the influence on members to leave the team. It is the sum of all the factors influencing members to stay in the team. Cohesion is determined by the assessment of team members of the desirable and undesirable consequences of team membership. Highly cohesive teams are a source of security for members. They serve to reduce anxiety and to heighten self-esteem. There are several ways in which a team can increase its cohesion:

1. **Structuring cooperation among members:** One of the most predictable outcomes of cooperative interaction is that team members will like each other and value their membership in the team.
2. **Successfully meeting the personal needs of members:** For a team to be cohesive, the members' needs for mutual inclusion, mutual influence, and mutual affection among themselves must be met.
3. **Maintaining a high level of trust among members:** without a high level of trust, a team cannot be cohesive.

4. *Promoting norms that encourage the expression of individuality, trusting and trustworthy behaviour, and concern and affection among members:* For a team to be cohesive, members need to understand how to implement appropriate norms within the team.

# UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP

## “TOWER BUILDING GAME”

- Objective** : **Tower Building Exercise** will help participants learn about the leadership processes and different leadership style.
- Time** : 90 minutes
- Materials** : Flip charts, markers, paper tape  
Blocks for building tower and one blindfold for each team  
Slides, LCD Projector, and Computer
- Learning methods** : Group exercise, debriefing, short lecture
- Activity 1** : 30 minutes
- 1.1** : Facilitator divides the group into teams of 4-6 persons. Two persons would be assigned the role of ‘managers’; one person would be assigned the role of the ‘worker’ and one person would be assigned the role of ‘time keeper’ from each team. Remaining members would be there as observers.
- 1.2** : Give five minutes to the teams to decide who would be the managers, worker and time keeper.
- 1.3** : Facilitator calls the managers of all the teams and explain them the task which is to build the highest tower possible with the blocks given.
- 1.4** : The managers would need to set a target for their respective team and inform the facilitator who would note it down on a flip chart.  
Once the managers have decided the height of the tower, they would go back in their teams and inform all about the target which cannot be changed.
- 1.5** : The facilitator instructs that only the worker would be allowed to build the tower and hence no one else from the group would be allowed to touch the blocks.
- 1.6** : The facilitator now announces that the worker is going to be blindfolded. It follows by another announcement that the worker can build the tower

only with her/his left hand. (*Note: If a worker is left handed, s/he would use their right hand to build the tower.*)

**1.7** : Facilitator informs that only managers can guide the worker during the tower building process.

**1.8** : The facilitator now announces that each team, completing their task, would get 10 points for each block. If the task is not completed i.e. if the target is not achieved, no points will be given. The teams would get a bonus of 5 points for each additional block.

**1.9** : Facilitator hand over the blocks to each team. A total of 15 minutes is given to build the tower.

**Activity 2** : 30 minutes

**2.1** : Facilitator starts the debriefing by asking following questions:

- Did you achieve the target?
- What happened during the exercise?
  - How did the managers communicate with the worker during the exercise?
  - Was one manager more aggressive than the other?
  - Was there any element of trust on one manager over the other?
  - What happened when several constraints are imposed on the worker?
- Do you find similar experience in your everyday work situation?
- What lessons can be drawn with regard to leadership processes from this experience?

*The facilitator may start debriefing with the experience of worker, followed by the managers and then the observers.*

**Activity 3** : 30 minutes

**3.1** : Facilitator lead a discussion on the following:

- Leadership
- Leadership skills and attributes
- Leadership style

**3.2** : Facilitator facilitate a question and answer (Q&A)

session and allow participants to ask questions and add comments, after the presentation.

- 3.3** : Facilitator close the session by thanking all for their participation.

### Observation Sheet for the Observers

- Out of the two managers, who takes the lead to guide the worker?
- Which manager was more assertive?
- Did the worker listen to managers?
- Did the worker pay attention to a particular manager's guidance?

## Reading on

# UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

### Leadership defined

According to George R. Terry, “Leadership is the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group objectives”. Robert Tannebaum, Irving R. Weschler, and Fred Massarik define leadership as “interpersonal influence exercised in a situation and directed, through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specialised goal – or goals”. Harold Koontz and Cyril O’Donnell state that “leadership is influencing people to follow in the achievement of a common goal”. These definitions make no mention of any particular type of organisation. In any situation where someone is trying to influence the behaviour of another individual or group, leadership is occurring. Thus, everyone attempts leadership at one time or another whether her/his activities are centred around a business, educational institution, hospital, political organisation, or family. Anytime any individual attempts to influence the behaviour of another, that individual is the potential leader and the person he is attempting to influence is the potential follower, no matter whether that person is your “boss”, a colleague, a subordinate, a friend, or a relative.

### Leadership styles

Leadership styles may be classified on the basis on the behaviour of the leader:

**The Autocratic Leader:** who imposes his own will with very little concern for the members’ needs, opinions and preferences. Such a leader has great concern for accomplishing the task but little or no concern for the members.

**The Laissez-faire Leader:** who has little or no concern for the task at hand, but is concerned about the people, letting them act according to their own wishes.

**The Democratic Leader:** who is concerned equally with the task and the people. In the ultimate democratic tradition, the leadership function is shared between members of the group.

The same individual in different circumstance and/or with different groups may behave differently.

### Leadership skills

Leaders use three different types of skills – technical, human, and conceptual. Although these skills are interrelated in practice, they can be considered separately.

**Technical skill** refers to a person's knowledge and ability in any type of process or technique. Examples are the skills learned by accountants, engineers, typists, etc. This skill is the distinguishing feature of job performance at the operating level; but as employees rise to leadership responsibilities, their technical skills become relatively less important. They increasingly depend on the technical skills of their subordinates; and in many cases have never practiced some of the technical skills that they supervise.

**Human skill** is the ability to work effectively with people and to build teamwork. No leader at any organisational level escapes the requirement for effective human skill. It is a major part of leadership behaviour.

**Conceptual skill** is the ability to think in terms of models, frameworks, and broad relationships, such as long-range strategic plans. It becomes increasingly important in higher managerial jobs. Conceptual skill deals with ideas while human skill concerns people and technical skill is with things.

### Leadership attributes

What do people expect of good leaders? Here are descriptions of some qualities that would be desired of a good leader.

**Acceptability:** The group considers the leader to be the kind they would have selected themselves, even if she/he be appointed by the authority.

**Conceptual skill and creativity:** She/he is creative and original; able to originate and develop new ideas to improve things. It is more than just problem-solving; it is conceptual thinking for idea-building, and looking ahead to plan pre-emptive changes. It represents the ability to see an issue in all its aspects – present and future.

**Confidence – personal and interpersonal:** People want to feel secure. To achieve that, the leader not only inspires confidence, but is also quietly confident of her/his own ability. This gives her/him the presence reflecting the competency. This should not, however, generate dependency on the leader. She/he is aware of this danger, and goes out of her/his way to see that individuals retain and maintain their individuality and initiative.

**Delegation:** She/he is able to delegate, and understands what delegation means. An often heard definition of supervision is 'getting work done through others'. This involves the delegation of responsibilities. However, those in all levels of management and supervision might consider whether or not, in areas of task delegation, they actually abdicate, confiscate, or truly delegate.

**Dependability and high integrity:** She/he demonstrates integrity and trust – an inclination to hold on to her/his convictions within reasonable bounds, instead of changing her/his mind whenever it seems popular to do so, a preparedness to assume responsibility for her/his actions rather than "passing the buck".

**Effective persuasiveness:** She/he is able to persuade others to take actions she/he favours. Such persuasiveness involves power of expression, personal acceptance and an understanding of the points of view of those to be persuaded.

**Effectively helpful:** She/he is available and understanding when people approach for help. She/he avoids the impression that she/he never has time to help or to listen to problems. When a supervisor is really under pressure and just can't devote time at the moment, there is nothing wrong in her/his saying so and telling people she/he will be with them just as soon as she/he can, provided she/he actually does live up to her/his promise.

**Emotionally balanced:** She/he leaves her/his personal problems and feelings out of her/his relationships with the group and its members by showing a consistent understanding approach. A lack of emotional balance stirs up tension and stress in the group – when she/he is grumpy and irritable one day and pleasant and agreeable the next.

**Empathy:** She/he shows respect for employees both as individuals and as a group. She/he is sensitive to and understanding of their needs.

**Exemplary:** She/he lives up to what he says by setting the right example. The old cliché – “do not do what I do, do what I say”, just does not work in on-the-job human relations.

**Fair-minded:** She/he is fair and square at all times and plays no favourites. She/he has the ability to make things happen. She/he is not afraid to be tough, because she/he is fair; knowing that toughness will be acceptable if it is fair as well.

**Functional work environment builder:** She/he ensures that the work environment is such that there is a minimum of conflict and confusion. Too much conflict and confusion generate fear and anxiety in group members causing inefficiency.

**High self-esteem:** A wise leader is satisfied to know that she/he is right. She/he never feels the need to prove that others are wrong.

**Leadership and membership roles skill:** It is important to be able to be accepted as one of the group, but it is just as important not to go so far that status as a leader is destroyed. Some leaders have tried so hard to be “one of the girls/boys,” particularly in off-the-job get-togethers, that they have crossed that indefinable (but very real) line that separates leaders from those they lead. Folks do realise that this line exists and that it needs to be respected.

**Motivated and motivator:** She/he is able to motivate her/himself, before proceeding to motivate others. She/he manifests urge to assume responsibility, and to strive for better things. It includes something of a missionary spirit to crusade for her/his ideals. It includes personal ambition with a degree of altruism and genuine desire to help others.

**Open-mindedness:** She/he realises and acknowledges that many of the ideas she/he uses come from the people in her/his group. Many studies show that leaders do not originate all the plans; in fact, with many good leaders, the majority of the ideas do originate in the group. Some leaders seem to feel that they lose face if they accept suggestions from subordinates. Experienced leaders know the value of having the group feel that they are participating and that goals set reflect their own ideas and contributions. In some instances, successful leaders have encouraged group members to come up with courses of action that they might already have in mind.

**Personally committed:** To become a leader doesn't require exceptional personal intelligence, but rather exceptional personal commitment.

**Responsible:** She/he acts as a buffer between employees and higher management by not passing on the pressure to those who work for her/him. This means taking personal responsibility for the directions and orders she/he is required to give even when they are not what she/he, personally, would like to do or would have chosen. She/he never says, "the top brass says we have to do this" – because this shows that she/he is shirking responsibility.

**Sound decision making and judgement:** She/he is able to make high quality decision in time, avoiding procrastination on unpleasant issues. She/he endeavours to foresee effects of her/his decisions on the future and take into account the likely actions of others people. She/he also possesses clarity of thought in decision making and strength of character, which are necessary ingredients in democratic leadership. Decisions about the correct use of social power are far more complex and difficult.

It is important to note that the role of the leader is very important in achieving the common goals. A leader must raise members' awareness and motivation and also convince the people that they can affect the change.

While concluding it is important to highlight that one can improve their leadership ability only if one understands the one's own limitations and potentialities. One should not try to force oneself into a role that makes them feel awkward and uncomfortable.

Leadership skills can be learned. One's success as a leader/supervisor calls for the blending of their personal capacities with sound leadership principles, continually applied. Studies indicate that the best leaders, despite their many differences in personality, do practice certain principles that helped them reach the top.

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*The reading on [Understanding Leadership](#) has been adapted from the learning material written by Prem Chadha, Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA).*

# UNDERSTANDING DECISION MAKING

## “PROJECT PLANNING EXERCISE”

- Objective** : **Project Planning Exercise** activity and discussion will help participants understand and discover the critical processes of decision making in organisational context.
- Time** : 120 minutes
- Materials** : Flip charts, markers, paper tape, and enough copies of Project Planning Exercise sheet for all the participants  
Slides, LCD Projector, and Computer
- Learning method** : Short lecture, individual and group exercise, and debriefing
- Activity 1** : 60 minutes
- 1.1** : Announce that the Project Planning Exercise is both an individual and a team exercise.
- 1.2** : Divide the large group into smaller teams of 3-4 persons (*The number in each team can vary depending on the total number of participants*).
- 1.3** : Distribute Sheet 1 and Sheet 2 of the Project Planning Exercise to each participant and read out the situation and the task as described in the Sheet 1.
- 1.4** : Ask the participants to do the exercise individually before joining their respective teams (Refer Sheet 1). Give 15 minutes for completing the exercise individually. The individual participant will rank the management activities in Step 1 column of the Sheet 2.
- 1.5** : On completion of individual ranking, ask the participants to work in their respective team and to agree on the sequencing of management activities as a team in Step 2 column of Sheet 2. Give 30 minutes to complete the task. Remind the participants that the ranking in Step 2 should be exactly same for each team member, as these are agreed by all members.
- 1.6** : On completion of Step 2, share with the teams, the Project Planning Expert's Ranking sheet and ask the participants to transfer the ranking to Step 3 column of Sheet 2.

- 1.7** : On completion of Step 3, ask the participants to calculate the difference between column 1 (individual ranking) and column 3 (expert's ranking) for each management activity (row) and write the difference in Step 4 column of Sheet 2. *For example, if a participant's rank for management activity I (Find qualified people to fill positions) is 3 and the expert's ranking for this activity is 12, the difference (1-3) is 9.*
- 1.8** : On completion of Step 4, ask the participants to calculate the difference between column 2 (team ranking) and column 3 (expert's ranking) for each management activity (row) and write the difference in Step 5 column of Sheet 2. *For example, if a team's rank for the management activity I (Find qualified people to fill positions) is 8 and the expert's ranking for this activity is 12, the difference (2-3) is 4.*
- 1.9** : Ask the participants to make a total of column Step 4 and column Step 5.  
Ask each team to work out the Average Individual Score. This will be done by adding up all the individual scores (got from step 4) of each team member and divide by the total number of the team members. Ask each team to write the Average Individual Score under appropriate team's number in Sheet 2.
- 1.10** : Ask each team to insert the team score (got from Step 5) under appropriate team's number in Sheet 2.
- 1.11** : Ask each team to work out the difference between the team score and the average individual score. If the team score is lower than the average individual score, then it's a gain for the team. If the team score is higher than average individual score, then it's a loss for the team.
- 1.12** : Ask each team to share who has scored the lowest and explain that the lowest score is the best score.
- 1.13** : Ask each team the number of individual scores lower than the team score.
- Activity 2** : 30 minutes
- 2.1** : Lead a debriefing discussion by asking the following questions:
- How easy was it to make the decisions individually and collectively in the team?
  - What worked well in the team?

- How did you build the consensus decision within the team?
- How the differences of opinion were handled with in making the decision?
- What were the challenges?
- What lessons can be drawn with regard to decision making from this experience?

**Activity 3** : 30 minutes

**3.1** : Make a presentation highlighting the various aspects and processes of decision making.

**3.2** : Facilitate a question and answer (Q&A) session. Allow participants to ask questions and add comments, after the presentation.

**3.3** :  
Close the session by thanking all for their participation.

# PROJECT PLANNING EXERCISE

## Sheet 1

### 1. *The Situation*

Your organisation has just assigned you to a newly formed team, which is to take over a non-formal education project. Your entire team has been assigned responsibility and authority to first design a plan for managing the project and then, after top management has revised and accepted your plans, carry out the project.

Your team has been deliberately formed of individuals with experience from a number of departments because it was felt a greater range of knowledge and skills were needed in order to arrive at the most effective plans. None of you have been told anything about the project so far, other than it is expected to grow to sizeable proportions requiring additional people.

### 2. *The Task*

Despite the lack of information regarding the project, your team must now design a preliminary plan for managing the project. On the next page is a list of 15 management activities (I through XV) arranged in random order. Your task is to rank order these activities according to the sequence you would follow in managing the project. This sequence will be reviewed by the management before you are given the go-ahead to begin work on the project.

### 3. *Step 1*

Since you have a few minutes before your team meets for the first time, go over the list of activities in the next page (Sheet 2) and without discussing it with anyone, rank order the management activities according to the sequence you think should be followed in managing the project. Start with '1', the first activity through '15', the last activity. Please use column Step 1 (Individual Ranking).

### **Step 2**

Now, as a team, agree to the sequence of activities that should be followed. Please use column Step 2 (Team Ranking)

# PROJECT PLANNING EXERCISE

Sheet 2

Sl. No.	Management Activities	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
		Individual Ranking	Team Ranking	Planning Expert's Ranking	Individual Difference (1 – 3)	Team Difference (2 – 3)
I	Recruit qualified staff to fill positions					
II	Measure progress toward and/or deviation from the project's objectives					
III	Identify and analyse the various tasks necessary to implement the project					
IV	Develop strategies (priorities, sequence, and timing of major steps)					
V	Arrange responsibility, accountability, and authority among project team					
VI	Set project objectives (desired results)					
VII	Train and develop staff for new responsibilities					
VIII	Gather and analyse the facts of current project situation					
IX	Establish qualifications for new positions					
X	Take necessary corrective actions on project					
XI	Coordinate ongoing project activities					
XII	Determine the allocation of resources (including budget, facilities etc.)					
XIII	Measure individual performance against performance targets					
XIV	Develop individual performance targets for each staff					
XV	Identify, analyse and decide on basic course of action					
<b>Total</b>						

# PROJECT PLANNING EXERCISE

## *Planning Expert's Ranking*

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Management Activities</b>	<b>Planning Experts' Ranking</b>
I	Recruit qualified staff to fill positions	8
II	Measure progress toward and/or deviation from the project's objectives	13
III	Identify and analyse the various tasks necessary to implement the project	5
IV	Develop strategies (priorities, sequence, and timing of major steps)	4
V	Arrange responsibility, accountability, and authority among project team	11
VI	Set project objectives (desired results)	2
VII	Train and develop staff for new responsibilities	9
VIII	Gather and analyse the facts of current project situation	1
IX	Establish qualifications for new positions	6
X	Take necessary corrective actions on project	15
XI	Coordinate ongoing project activities	12
XII	Determine the allocation of resources (including budget, facilities etc.)	7
XIII	Measure individual performance against performance targets	14
XIV	Develop individual performance targets for each staff	10
XV	Identify, analyse and decide on basic course of action	3

## Reading on

# DECISION MAKING IN ORGANISATIONS

### Introduction

Life is an unbroken series of choices, small and big. Since making a choice implies deciding, we are ever taking decisions about one thing or another including, not infrequently, the decision not to make a decision. Effecting decisions invariably entails change, and a certain fear of coming face to face with the unknown – of being ejected out of a situation which is certain and familiar into one that is uncertain and unfamiliar.

We are faced with a decision situation when there is choice between at least two courses of action. Careful attention must be paid to consider what all courses of action are available in a given situation. Successful decision-makers often derive success from their ability to think in new ideas.

Decisions are socially committing. They imply efforts at implementation if the decision maker is to fulfil her/his role, and maintain her/his reputation as well as self-image as a dependable entity.

It is doubtful whether decisions are always directed toward achieving certain goals. We may, more realistically, view most decisions as being concerned with discovering courses of action that satisfy a given set of constraints. This set, as a whole, may then be viewed as the goal. Those constraints that motivate the decision-maker and those that guide her/his search are often perceived as more “goal-like” than those that limit her/his choices, or those that may be used to test whether a potential course of action is feasible.

Success or failure of an enterprise depends on the quality of its decision making. As such, organisation design must facilitate decision making. Decision-making is basic to the entire management process: the decision-maker establishes objectives, makes planning decisions, organising decisions, motivating decisions, and control decisions. She/he selects one strategy over other based on relevant criteria, such as utility, value-added service, costs, and/or benefits. These criteria, usually, are not entirely of the decision-maker’s own choice, and are heavily influenced and modified by other interested groups, such as beneficiaries, donors, other agencies, government, etc.

A decision is made when the organisation faces a problem, when it is dissatisfied with existing conditions, or when it is given a choice. Considerable activity precedes the actual decision. In large organisations, people at operational levels discover problems, define them and lay out alternatives for a decision to be taken.

Designing decision making processes is not easy, and setting standard procedures for every situation is not feasible. The theory of decision making can, therefore, be viewed only as an approximation to a systematic method of tackling

problems and making decisions. Some important features of decision making towards effective functioning of an organisation are:

- speed of the decision making process;
- degree of rationality characterising the decision process;
- degree of acceptance of decisions with those affected by the decisions.

In general, the decision making process involves a problem to be solved, a number of conflicting objectives to be reconciled, a number of possible alternative courses of action from which the best has to be chosen, and some way of measuring the value or pay off of alternative courses of action.

### Six elements in decision-making

There are about six elements which are common to all kinds of decisions. They are:

- ▶ **The decision-maker:** It refers to the individual or group making a choice from the available strategies.
- ▶ **Goals or ends to be served:** These are objectives the decision-maker seeks to achieve through her/his decision.
- ▶ **The preference or value system:** This refers to the criteria that the decision-maker uses in making his/her choices. It could include maximisation of benefits or utility, optimisation of resources, etc.
- ▶ **Strategies:** These are the different alternative courses of action from which the decision-maker can choose. Strategies are limited by the resources under control of the decision-maker.
- ▶ **States of nature:** States of nature are factors that are not under control of the decision-maker. They are aspects of the decision-maker's environment affecting her/his choice of strategy.
- ▶ **The outcome:** The outcome represents the resultant from a given strategy which contribute to the achievement of goals or ends to be served. When the outcome is expressed in numerical terms, it is sometimes called 'payoff'.

### Typology of decisions

Decisions may be categorised into three types:

- ▶ **Strategic decisions:** These decisions are concerned with policy and strategy of the organisation; for example, selection of programme mix which the agency will undertake, and the constituencies to which it will cater.
- ▶ **Administrative decisions:** These are concerned with structuring of the agency's resources so as to optimise its performance; for example, selection of distribution channels, location of facilities.
- ▶ **Operating decision:** These are mainly concerned with day-to-day operations of the agency; like allocating resources, setting schedules and inventory levels.

## Decision making process

A good deal of the discussion on decision-making tends to centre around problem solving which, however, is only a partial focus. In problem solving both the conditions of the situation and the requirements that the decision has to satisfy are known.

An important problem in organisational planning is the allocation of decision making responsibilities and authority. Herbert Simon, who enunciated the 'principle of bounded rationality'<sup>3</sup>, rightly remarks: the possibility of permitting a particular individual to make a particular decision will often hinge on whether there can be transmitted to her/him the information she/he will need to make a wise decision, and whether she/he, in turn, will be able to transmit her/his decision to other members of the organisation whose behaviour it is supposed to influence.

Decision-makers must understand that the decision making process starts with an assessment of the situation; and ends only after a successful system has been evolved to sustain the changed situation vis-à-vis the objective set for the decision.

Various management scientists have identified the steps in decision making. Marin B. Folson has suggested seven steps:

- Analysing the situation,
- Collecting facts,
- Analysing the factors or the problem,
- Creating new ideas and new ways to tackle the problem,
- Weighing alternative courses of action,
- Deciding on a single course of action, and
- Following up.

## Human deterrents to decision-making

A major problem in large organisations is the time it takes to get decisions made. Decision-making process of several large organisations has failed to keep pace with the response required by a fast changing environment.

Every organisation has a tempo or speed with which it moves, makes and implements decision, reacts to environmental pressures, identifies and solves problems, and grasps new opportunities. Speed and decisiveness in decision making are at the heart of organisation tempo. Because it does not lend itself to

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<sup>3</sup> **Bounded rationality** was proposed by Herbert Simon as a way to represent how real managers make decisions in real organisations. It is the rationality that takes into account the limitations of the decision maker in terms of information, cognitive capacity, and attention as opposed to substantive rationality, which is not limited to satisficing, but rather aims at fully optimised solutions. According to him **Rationality** of individuals is limited by the information they have, the cognitive limitations of their minds, and the finite amount of time they have to make a decision. The limited attentional capability of humans results in their **bounded** capacity to be rational. Source: <http://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/bounded-rationality/2786>

measurement in conventional terms, managements have tended to ignore it. Yet it can be argued that tempo bears a closer relationship to organisational success than does any other factor!

An organisation must be specifically organised to make decisions faster and to become more decisive, to compensate for such human inclinations as timidity, indecisiveness, and factionalism. But let's first examine what frequently happens when the human equation is cranked into the decision-making process.

Despite organisational charts that define responsibility areas, many decisions involve several people and departments, all of whom have an interest in the decision that affects their functions. This overlapping of interests, and the problems of coordination, frequently becloud the identity of the individual who should make the decision.

The fear of making a mistake encourages the quest for an inordinate amount of information and supporting data. Hence, decisions that could be made speedily with minimum data and good "gut" feeling get delayed pending more and more information, most of which frequently may only reconfirm what the decision maker already knows. Good judgment decision-making, and innovation, are rare to be seen.

### Organising for decision-making

For a decision-making process to be transparent, identity of the decision-maker must be precise and not vague. A large number of people may feel the impact of a decision. They like to know its source, so that they may interact with the decision-maker, if necessary, for rectification, amendment or withdrawal of the decision. At such times, ambiguity about identity of the decision-maker can be most frustrating. The power of decisions is felt, but the source of power is not perceivable. Such a situation can lead to agitation and pressures to smoke out the power centre to become accountable.

Another play is to follow Prof. Northcote Parkinson: "If you want to avoid a decision, form a committee". The way responsibility and accountability is structured in most organisations, decision-making has to be an individual executive act. Committees need not decide: they can generate information, points of view, ideas, etc., but may not decide. They are useful as sounding boards for complex action decisions; but, unless organisations are appropriately designed, role of committees as deliverers of accountability will remain suspect.

Then, there is the tendency to demand "right" or "correct decisions". Since the decisions relate to the future, and the future is uncontrollable and unpredictable, it is unfair to seek guarantees of "correct" or "right" decisions. There can only be bonafide or honest and accountable decisions. While a person can account for her/his honesty or bonafides, there may not be agreement on what is "right". In complicated organisational situations, involving innumerable variables, what may appear to be right from one perspective and at a given time, may be perceived to be utterly wrong when viewed from another angle or at another time. Again,

experience has shown a great deal of difference between the hind-sight of people, and their fore-sight.

As organisations become increasingly more complex, existence of bonafide accountable action –decision centres become more and more urgent. In the absence of such centres, problems may tend to accumulate, and make organisations even more vulnerable. In designing organisational decision system, it may help to give considerations to some of the issues raised here, as also to the human deterrents to decision-making.

## Conclusion

Style of decision making depends largely on the type of leadership – ranging from participatory to exploitative. Although participatory style is said to be the most favoured, non-exploitative authoritarian style has also been known to be highly effective.

While scientific decision theories provide logical frameworks toward solution of problems, they also emphasise the situational needs, extent of complexity, and the probable conditions involved in implementation of the decisions.

One of the greatest difficulties in decision making is that the solution of the problem does not always depend on factors controlled by the decision-maker; some determining factors may be controlled by antagonistic others. The decision-maker, therefore, can only take recourse to the solution most likely to succeed.

Whatever the problem pattern, the decision maker can decide only on the basis of available information, or the anticipated probabilities. Relevant information, together with accumulated experience, intuitive ability, and realistic vision, woven into possible strategies, enables one to take effective decisions.

Decision making is both a scientific process and a delicate art. Decision styles depend largely on willingness of the decision-maker to exercise authority vested in her/him.

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*The reading on [Decision Making in Organisations](#) has been adapted from the learning material written by Prem Chadha, Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA).*

# UNDERSTANDING INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION “BLINDFOLD GAME”

- Objective** : **Blindfold Game** and discussion will help participants to understand the importance of effective interpersonal communication in team functioning.
- Time** : 120 minutes
- Materials** : Blindfolds (7 for a group size of 21), chairs (3 for a group size of 21), one football, one whistle, flip charts, markers, paper tape  
A large room/ground where the participants will play the game  
Slide, LCD Projector, and Computer  
(Depending on the group size, the materials such as blind fold, chairs etc. may increase and/or decrease but it should be one third of the total group size.)
- Learning methods** : Learning game, short lecture, group work, and debriefing
- Activity 1** 60 minutes
- 1.1.** : Facilitator divides the large group in teams of three persons per team.
- 1.2** : Instruct the teams that the Blindfold Game would be played in three rounds by each team. Each team will consist of one instructor (who would use hand movements/signs to direct without speaking), one speaker (who would give directions to player by speaking following instructor) and one blindfolded person (who would follow the directions to reach the ball).
- 1.3** : Facilitator would give time to teams to plan their strategy to play the game. This strategy may include agreeing on hand movements so that the speaker could understand directions such as ‘go right’, ‘go left’, ‘go straight’, ‘come backwards’, ‘stop’, ‘bend down’, ‘higher’, ‘lower’ etc. among other.
- 1.4** : The speaker would sit on a chair facing the instructor who would be standing. The instructor would be able to see what is happening on the ground and where the football is moving and make gestures accordingly.  
The speaker would have her/his back towards ground and hence would not be able to see what is happening there but

- 1.5** : would speak following the instructor's hand movements.  
The blindfolded person would play the game and follow the voice of speaker to reach the target i.e. football. The facilitator would control the movement of football and also blow whistle when starting the rounds. *(In case whistle is not available, directions can be given verbally to start the game).*
- The instructor would guide their partner and give instructions to help them reach the target and also avoid the obstacles.
- 1.6** :
- 1.7** : The game would be played in three rounds as each member of team would switch roles and repeat the game till each one of them have played all the three roles that of instructor, speaker and blind folded person.
- 1.8** : The facilitators would ensure that no one is hurt when blindfolded. They can redirect the person if they venture into an area where there is possibility of their being bumping into any object/ other participants of the game.
- Activity 2** : 30 minutes
- 2.1** : On completion of the game, facilitators lead a debriefing discussion by asking participants the following questions:
- How did you feel during the game?
  - What happened during the game?
  - What challenges did you face?
  - Did they feel constrained at any point of time during the game in different roles?
  - Did you face similar situation in real life?
  - What lessons can be drawn with regard to importance of communication from this experience?
- Activity 3** : 30 minutes
- 3.1** : Make a presentation highlighting the various aspects and processes of interpersonal communication.
- 3.2** : Facilitate a question and answer (Q&A) session. Allow participants to ask questions and add comments, after the presentation.
- 3.3** : Close the session by thanking all for their participation.

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*This exercise has been adapted from MindTools*

## Reading on

# EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN ORGANISATION

### The Communication Process

The word 'communication' is derived from the Latin 'communis', meaning common. The communicator seeks to establish a "commonness" with a receiver. Thus, effective communication can be defined as transmission of information and understanding through the use of common symbols. The symbols may be verbal or nonverbal.

### The Need for Communication

All relationships start, sustain, change, and end through the medium of communication. Communication is a dynamic interactive process, of people relating to others, relying on feedback. Communication is process of linking people in organisations-vertically, horizontally, diagonally; and various parts of the organisation to the whole, such that the organisation achieves its goals, and each individual his/her. Achieving organisations must secure employee confidence and cooperation based on mutual understanding, for which effective decision-making, problem-solving and communication are imperative.

### The Communication Process

In understanding the communication process, it is important to familiarize with some commonly used term:

**Communicator:** Communicator is the person (or person) who sends a message. In an organisational framework, the communicator may be any employee with ideas, intentions, information, and a purpose for communicating.

**AIM:** Aim is intention of the message, the purpose in the communicator's mind: the reason why communication is taking place. Managers have numerous purposes for communicating, such as to have others understand their ideas, to understand the ideas of others, to gain acceptance of themselves or their ideas, or to produce action.

**Content:** This includes substance of the message, its component ideas, facts and the less obvious value contents.

**Message:** The outcome of encoding, expressing the communicator's purpose, is the message-either verbal or nonverbal. The message, then, is what the individual hopes to communicate to the intended receiver; and the exact form it takes depends to a great extent on the medium used to carry the message. Decisions relating to the two-the message and the medium-are often inseparable.

**Method/Medium:** Medium is the manner in which the message is conveyed, e.g., by writing, speaking, or signs, etc. It is the carrier of the message. Organisations provide information to members in a variety of ways: face-to-face, telephone, group meeting, computers, memos, policy statements, reward systems, schedules, and forecasts.

Not as obvious, however, are unintended messages that get sent by silence or inaction on a particular issue; as well as decisions on which goals and objectives not to be pursued, and which methods not to utilize. Nonverbal media, such as facial expressions, tone of voice, and body movements also communicate. This is what is meant by the earlier statement that evening a manager does communicate.

**Communicant/Receiver:** If communicator is the 'subject', then the communicant is the 'object' to whom the message is directed.

**Decoding:** In order for the process of communication to be completed, the message must be decoded in terms relevant to the receiver. Decoding involves interpretation. Receivers interpret the message in light of their own previous experiences and frames of reference. The closer the decoded message is to the intent desired by the communicator, the more effective is the communication. This underscores the importance of the communicator being "receiver-oriented."

**Situation:** This is the context or environment in which the communication is taking place.

**Feedback:** Receiver-to-communicator feedback in the communication process is desirable. One-way communication processes are those which do not allow such feedback: this increases possibility of distortion between the intended message and the received message. A feedback loop provides a channel for receiver response which enables the communicator to determine whether the message has been received, and has produced the intended response. Two-way communication processes provide for this important receiver-to-communicator feedback. For the manager, communication feedback may come in many ways. In face-to-face situations direct feedback is possible through verbal exchange as well as such subtle means as facial expressions of discontent or misunderstanding. In addition, indirect means may indicate communication break-downs. These are, declines in productivity, poor quality of work, increased absenteeism or turnover, and a lack of coordination, and/or too much conflict between groups.

**Noise:** Noise is those factors that distort the intended message. Noise may occur in any of the elements of communication for several reasons: a manager may be under severe time constraint, and may act without communication, or may communicate hastily with incomplete information; or a subordinate may attach a different meaning to a word or phrase than that intended by the manager.

**The process of Communication:** All the above elements are essential for communication to occur. They cannot, therefore, be viewed in isolation. They describe the various things which need to be in place for any communication to

occur. Such communication may be one-to-one vertical or horizontal, or may involve an individual and group.

### Nonverbal Communication

Language is an important medium to verbally express ideas. Communication also involves non-verbal means. Stage designers and advertising copy-writers use colour, size and distance as signals in communication. In short, anything to which people can attach meaning may be and is used as medium in communication.

A relatively recent area of research among behavioural scientists is the information sent by a communicator that is unrelated to the spoken word—the nonverbal information. The major interest is in physical clues which are the characteristics of the communicator's physical presentation; for example, hand movements, facial expressions, eye movements. These are viewed as important influence on the receiver's interpretation of the message. Some factors which research has shown to provide nonverbal information are:

**Distance:** In some situations, it indicates attraction or non-attraction while in others it may indicate status differences.

**Orientation:** Face-to-face, back-to-back, or side-by-side orientations may transmit specific information. Cooperating individuals often sit side-by-side while those in competition usually face each other.

**Posture:** This may transmit messages of formality or relaxation. Posture is thought of as giving clue to the self-confidence or energy level of another person, or to the status relationships between people.

**Physical Contact:** Touching, shaking hands, holding, often convey messages. They may convey feelings of attraction or non-attraction or intimacy. Handshake is probably the most widely accepted touch behaviour in organisational settings.

**Facial Expressions:** Smiles, frowns, yawns, raised eyebrows, and so on conditionally transmit information during face-to-face communication. Many people think that face is the primary source of information of one's feelings as it can show happiness, surprise, fear, anger, interest, and embarrassment, to mention a few of the emotions.

**Looking:** Eye movement and eye contact transmit information regarding interest, non-interest, attraction etc. Many oral communicators want the receivers to look them in the eye, so that they know they are receiving attention. In case one does not want others to know his/her feelings, s/he does not make eye contact.

**The Tone:** 'Tone' may, strictly not qualify as 'nonverbal'; but needs to be taken note of. As receivers of messages, we usually attach greater significance to the way something is said than to what is said. The tone indicates emotional feelings as do one's age, gender, appearance, and status.

**The Appearance:** While it is felt that physical attractiveness should not make a difference in interpersonal evaluations, the fact is that it does.

**The Environment:** The environment in which one works can influence one's interaction with others. The quality of one's immediate surrounding – the rooms in which you live and work-can have a profound effect on one's psychological mood.

## Listening

According to Carl Rogers and FJ Roethlisberger, real communication occurs, and the barriers to communication-like the evaluative tendency-are avoided, when people listen with understanding. It means that the listeners see the expressed idea and attitude from the communicator's point of view, sense how it feels to her/him, achieve her/his frame of reference in regard to the thing s/he is talking about.

### Quick suggestions for good listening

There are numerous pointers for effective listening that have been found to be effective in organisational settings. Keith Davis has suggested "Ten Commandments for Good Listening":

**Stop talking:** You cannot listen if you are talking. "Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice", Said William Shakespeare in his famous play "Hamlet". Nature gave the humans two ears but only one tongue, which is a gentle hint that they should listen more than they talk.

**Put the speaker at ease:** Help her/him feel that s/he is free to talk. A permissive environment often helps.

**Show the speaker that you want to listen:** Look and act interested. Do not read your mail while s/he talks. Listen to understand rather than to oppose.

**Remove distractions:** Do not doodle, tap, or shuffle papers. Will it be quieter if you shut the door?

**Empathies with her/him:** Try to put yourself in her/his place so that you can see her/his point of view.

**Be patient:** Allow plenty of time. Do not interrupt her/him. Do not start for the door or walk away.

**Hold your temper:** An angry person often gets the wrong meaning from words.

**Go easy on argument and criticism:** This puts the other person on the defensive. S/he "clam up" or get angry.

**Ask questions:** This encourages the communicant and shows you are listening. It helps to develop points further.

**Stop talking:** This is the first and the last; because all other commandments depend on it. You just cannot do a good listening job while you are talking.

### Oral and Written Communication

**Oral Communication:** Oral communication invariably involves two-way, face-to-face interaction. This provides opportunity for interpersonal discussion, but is feasible only in small groups. Such interaction allows participants to know each other, and appraise the personal traits of others. It also helps assessment of the emotional and verbal response of those being communicated with; to know if the communication has produced the expected results; to seek feedback, and to rectify distortions quickly.

**Written Communication:** Written communication in organisations constitutes memoranda and letters, house bulletins, job instructions, manuals, suggestion schemes, etc. Written communication has several advantages, e.g. as an instrument of record, precision, uniformity, permanence, and reduction of buck-passing when authority is delegated, etc. There are several disadvantages attributed to written communication; like, (a) it is time consuming; (b) it is difficult to put everything in writing; (c) there is less possibility of matters remaining confidential; (d) it can give rise to red-tapism; etc.

# UNDERSTANDING COLLABORATION AND CONFLICT IN TEAMS

## “WIN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN”

- Objective** : **Win As Much As You Can** exercise and discussion will help participants understand the conflict and importance of collaboration in teams for benefit of all.
- Time** : 120 minutes
- Materials** : Flip charts, markers, paper tape, A-4 sheets to make small chits
- Learning methods** : Short lecture, brainstorming, group formation and sharing by groups, debriefing
- Teaching aids** : ‘Win as much as you can’ game
- Activity 1** : 30 minutes
- 1.1** : Facilitator divides the group into small groups of four persons in each group by calling out numbers 1-4.
- 1.2** : The groups are seated in different corners of the room for internal group discussions.
- 1.3** : The facilitators explain the rules of the game to the group.
- 1.4** : The purpose of the game is to “win as much as you can”.
- 1.5** : The game is to be played in 10 rounds.
- 1.6** : Each group has to make a choice between two symbols, X or Y.
- 1.7** : The pay-off depends upon the choice made by all the groups. It is as follows:
- 4X: Every group loses 1 point
  - 3X: Groups playing X win 1 point each
  - 1Y: Groups playing Y lose 3 points

- 2X: Groups playing X win 2 points each
- 2Y: Groups playing Y lose 2 points each
- 1X: Groups playing X win 3 points
- 3Y: Groups playing Y lose 1 point each
- 4Y: Each group wins 1 point

- Activity 2** : 45 minutes  
Groups play the game:
- 2.1** : Groups must not communicate with the other group members during the rounds.
- 2.2** : In each group, members should agree upon a single choice for each round.
- 2.3** : Other groups should not know the choices made by one group alone.
- 2.4** : Two-three minutes given to make the choice in each round.
- 2.5** : After the choice is made, the facilitator asks each group their choice and announces the overall result (say “two X and two Y”).
- 2.6** : Each group notes down their score accordingly, without revealing it to the other group.
- 2.7** : If any questions are asked, the facilitators’ response should be the name of the game – ‘win as much as you can’.  
The game continues for rounds two, three and four.
- 2.8** : At the end of round 4, a bonus is announced. The scores are to be doubled. Before the groups are to make their choices, the facilitator allows one representative from each group to negotiate with representatives of the other groups for 5 minutes.
- 2.9** : Round 5 and 6 are played
- 2.10** : On completion of round 8, participants are all invited into the centre to negotiate openly.  
Rounds 9 and 10 are played.
- Activity 3** : 30 minutes
- 3.1** : Facilitator debrief the group by asking following:

- Who won the game? Why?
- Does winning in small group mean more to you than winning of all the groups together?
- How did you feel in the process?
- Can you relate it to the outside world?
- The effects of the competition and collaboration can be discussed.

**Activity 4** : 15 minutes

**4.1** : Facilitators discuss on the understanding of the group in relation to 'you' in the game. They elaborate if the 'you' were meant as individual and/or for describing organisations? The facilitators ask the participants to relate this game situation to their real life scenario. The facilitators should reiterate how collaboration can be beneficial and maximise profit for all. Facilitators wrap up the session by highlighting conflicts and importance of collaboration in the teams for benefit of all and summarising key points from the session.

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*Adapted from Handbook of Structure Experiences for Human Relations-Volume II.  
Pfeiffer and Jones, University Associates, U.S.A., 1974)*

## Reading on

# HANDLING GROUP AND ORGANISATIONAL CONFLICT

In any group conflict is inevitable because different people have different viewpoints. In a work group or organisation, particularly, group members see the needs of the organisation differently because their different job orientations.

Since much conflict is natural, the goal of a group is not to eliminate conflict, but to view it as essential healthy. It can be healthy if it is handled and resolved constructively. The Group or organisation is enhanced by exploring differences; new ideas and new learnings result. Usually when conflict arises and is dealt with openly, people are stimulated to creativity, alternatives are considered, better ideas come forth, and better course of action results.

### Ways of Dealing with Organisational Conflict

There are five common ways of dealing with organisational conflict. Any one method of dealing with conflict will not apply to situations or all personalities. The leader in a group must consider when to employ what style, and with whom. If a leader has used one method successfully, he may use it to excess. Learning about the alternative means of handling conflict gives us a wider choice of actions to employ in any given situation and makes us better able to tailor the response to the situation.

#### 1. Denial or Withdrawal

With this approach, a person attempts to “get rid of” conflict by denying that it exists. He simply refuses to acknowledge it. Usually, however, the conflict does not “go away”; it grows to the point where it becomes all but unmanageable. When the issue or the timing is not critical, denial may be the most productive way of dealing with conflict.

#### 2. Suppression or Smoothing Over

“We run a happy ship here.” “Nice people do not fight.” A person using suppression plays down differences and does not recognize the positive aspects of handling the conflict openly. Again, the source of the conflict rarely goes away. Suppression may, however, be employed when it is more important to preserve the relationship than to deal with an insignificant issue through conflict.

#### 3. Power or Dominance

Power is often used to settle differences. The source of the power may be vested in one’s authority or position (including referral to “the system,” higher supervision

and so on). Power may take the form of a majority (as in voting) or a persuasive minority. Power strategies, however, result in winner and losers, and the losers do not support a final decision in the same way that winner does. Future meetings of a group may be marred by the conscious or unconscious renewal of the struggle previously “settled” by the use of power. In some instances, especially where other forms of handling conflict are clearly inappropriate, power is effective. Voting is used national elections, for example, and “the law” applies equally to all.

#### **4. Compromise or Negotiation**

Although often regarded as a virtue in our culture, compromise (“You give a little, I’ll give a little, and we’ll meet each other halfway”) has some serious drawbacks. Bargaining often causes both sides to assume an inflated position, since they are aware that they are going to have to “give a little” and want to buffer the loss. The compromise solution may be watered down or weakened to the point where it will not be effective. There is often little real commitment by any of the parties. Yet there are times when compromise makes sense, such as when resources are limited or it is necessary to forestall a win-lose situation.

#### **5. Integration or Collaboration**

This approach requires that all parties to the conflict recognize the abilities and expertise of the others. Each individual’s position is well prepared, but the emphasis of the group is on trying to solve the problem at hand, rather than on defending particular positions or factions. Everyone fully expects to modify his original views as the group’s work progresses. Ultimately, the best of the group’s thinking will emerge. The assumption is that the whole of the group effort exceeds the sum of the individual members’ contributions. If this approach is allowed to become an either/or settlement, or if the conflict is resolved – due to lack of time, money, or understanding – by a form of power, the final decision will suffer accordingly.

#### **Conclusion**

Knowing some of the different methods of dealing with conflict is extremely useful to anyone working with groups or organisations. If a group leader is aware of these methods and their advantages and disadvantages, he will be more effective in handling conflict.