Project "Promoting Community Management in Vietnam - PCM"

Donor: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) Implementing organization: The Center of Promoting Development for Women and Children (DWC)

Training Materials

Facilitation Skills

(For secondary school students)

- Year 2014 -

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Training objectives

After training course, students will:

- Clearly understand active learning cycle;
- Clearly understand the necessity of facilitation and attitude that facilitators need;
- Clearly understand and know how to apply some basic facilitation skills and methods.

Generaliz Experience Analyze e Generalize Generalize Analyze Generalize Generalize New experience Apply

Active learning cycle

Definition of facilitation, attitude and capacity of facilitators

Nobody knows everything, but everybody knows something!

What is facilitation?

Facilitation is using different skills and methods to create the most effective working environment for a group with many members.

A facilitator should be a person equipped with proper attitude, skills and methods and existing materials to support a group of people to find solutions themselves (solutions = way to solve problems) for their problems.

What are included in facilitation?

- Attitude and behaviour of facilitators.
- Usage and combination of different skills and methods.
- Usage of typical means and materials to promote activities of a group.

When is facilitation used?

- Workshops
- Training courses
- Meetings
- Sharing-experience meetings, to determine, analyze and find solutions;
- Meetings to plan implementation of something...
- Taught lessons from teachers to students;
-

Sayings about facilitation:

"Always the beautiful answer who asks a more beautiful question"- E.E. Cummings

"Go to the people. Live with them. Learn from them. Love them. Start with what they know. Build with what they have. But with the best leaders, when the work is done, the task accomplished, the people will say 'We have done this ourselves."" – Lao Tzu

"You just do everything except making the correct answer, this will help people to find a solution themselves ... A facilitator should help people figure out their abilities, but not give reckless navigation" – Lao Tzu

'We learn through inheritance and past mistakes, not only through what has been done properly. If we assume that we have done everything right at any given time, we never need to change, we simply continue our current job and that we will end up as each other."- Anonymous

Attitude and capacity of facilitators

• Attitude

Is a combination of values, belief and individual ideas. We often judge behaviour of others, however, we rarely think of our own behaviour.

• Attitude is shown by:

- Words and ideas (therefore, you need to select proper words and sentences)
- Volume of voice (loud, soft or just enough to hear);
- Body language (gestures, actions);
- Group integrations (when disagreement or conflict occurs)
- Facial expressions (eye contacts, smile...)
- Other people understand facilitators via:
 - Language: 7%
 - Voice: 13%
 - Gesture: 80%
- Four main attitudes of facilitators:
 - **Care** about environment and lives of people.
 - **Sympathize** means put yourself in others' shoes to understand their thoughts and feelings in a particular problems.
 - **Respect** means whether other people have different opinion, idea, behaviour, gender or social status... you still have respect for their characteristics and abilities.
 - **Absolute belief** in their abilities to find solutions for their problems themselves.
- Some suggestions about attitude facilitators should have:
 - Do not judge.
 - Do not criticize.
 - Do not impose.
 - Do not think you are wiser than others.
 - Be really friendly.
 - Show respect to the people you work with.
 - Trust the people you work with.
 - Understand that each individual has their own behaviour and idea.
 - Care about every aspect of others' lives.
 - Treat people as you want them to treat you.

• Key abilities of a facilitator:

Group leadership	Guiding a group to share ideas and experience so that they are able to produce results, conclusions or actions plan. Attracting everyone's participation, especially vulnerable people.
Communication	Communicate with individuals and working groups. When communicate, facilitator should pay attention to listening and questing-giving skills.
Knowledge in a particular field	When transferring knowledge in a particular field, facilitator should respect knowledge and experience of participants.
Behaviour	Facilitator has proper behaviour, especially when there is conflict in a group.

Basic facilitation skills

Things I **heard** I will forget Things **I see** I will remember Things I **do** I will learn.

Listening skill

Any successful conversation starts with listening. Listening is a basic facilitation skill for every facilitator, because other facilitation skills rely on effective listening.

Effective listening is more difficult than we expect.

Many people think that listening is an easy task. In fact, sometimes we think we listen, however, we only **hea**r but don't really **listen**!

Hear: Passive. Neglectful. Don't try to understand.

Listening: Active. Focus. Try to understand.

• Obstacles while listening

Sometimes you listen, sometimes you don't

Most of us have the ability to think faster than to talk. Therefore, while listening, a listener often has 3-4 minutes free to think. Sometimes, listener use these minutes to mind his own business but not to listen.

You can overcome these obstacles by concentrate on conversation along with speaker's gestures and behaviour.

Sensitive language

To some people, there are several words with "provoking" and "teasing" meanings. These words make them angry and not want to listen anymore. Consequently, speaker and listener are not able to communicate and lead to communication breakdown.

Listen but think outside the topic

Sometimes, listener quickie judges the topic or speaker as boring and not worth listening to. This type of listener often rapidly believes that they can guess what other would talk next and conclude that there's no reason to continue listening.

Neglectful listening

Sometimes, "people-seem-to-listen" look into speaker's eyes as if they are listening carefully. However, in their mind, they are thinking about other things. They lost in private thoughts and their faces are sleepy or lifeless.

When realizing that many participants look sleepy in a meeting, facilitator should find a proper time to have a break or change speaking rhythm.

Difficult, complicated topic

When listening to difficult or complicated topic, we often struggle to listen and understand.

Normally, when a person does not understand, neither others do. Therefore, you may request speaker to explain more clearly or give an example.

Listen but not take into consideration

People often don't like their ideas being ignored by others. Therefore, when hearing someone talking something unlike their belief and thoughts, listener gradually refuses to keep listening. As a result, in any situation, facilitator should listen and try to understand what speaker's talking to know more about them.

Do or Don't when listening

DO		
0	Make eye-contact.	
0	Ensure appropriate distance so	
	that both speaker and listener are	
	able to hear what other talks.	
0	Convey concern, sympathy by	
	seldom nodding.	
\sim	Ask speaker to clarify ideas if	

- Ask speaker to clarify ideas if needed.
- Listening levels

DON'T

- o Hurry speaker.
- o Argue.
- o Interrupt.
- Do private things
- Criticize when not understand clearly.
- Hasty in making conclusion.

- 1. **Listening by head:** When listening by head, facilitator only understand the content of what speaker is talking about, for example, understand an event, a definition, an idea, a reason or an explanation...
- 2. Listening by heart: Listening by sympathy, it means facilitator understand values and feelings of speaker;
- 3. Listening by feet: When a facilitator goes to place where the speaker stays or words, he will understand what speaker want to talk about, why they talk so and meaning of their talks as well as hidden motivation...

Questioning skill

Objectives of questioning:

- Learn information;
- Encourage thinking;
- Knowledge and experience evaluation;
- Determine desire and difficulties;
- Check if information is received fully or not;
- Check if presented information is understood or not;
- Encourage giving new questions;
- Let people do reflection altogether...
- o

What is a good/bad question?

	A good question		A bad question
0	Raises curiosity.	0	ls general, vague
0	Encourages other people answer.	0	Is hard to answer.
0	Helps people understand each other	0	Interferes privacy.
	and problems.	0	Shows impose.
 Does not discriminate or isolate 			
	anybody.		
0	Prompts other questions		

Questions categorise

"Close" question: Is a question with "Yes" "No" answer, or only needs a short answer. A "close" question often includes "Who", "What", "Where", "When", "How many". A "close" question helps us **learn about an event**.

"Open" question: Is a question with analysis, generalization, evaluation, comparison in answer. An "open" question often includes "Why", "How", "By which". An "open" question helps us learn about the causes of an event, methods/ways, views and opinions or the respondents.

Questioning preparation:

- Define what to ask for?
- Estimate the ability to answer of the respondents.
- Think carefully to give a clear, precise and correct question.

Notes when giving question:

- Ask one question at a time.
- If needed, write the question on board or A0 paper so that everyone can see.
- Observe to ensure everyone understand the question.



Question starts with "Why?" is used least because it digs far into values and belief, this clearly involves privacy. Instead of asking "**Why**?" facilitator may ask questions like:

- What makes you think so? or
- How do you come to this conclusion?

Stimulating and dealing with contribution

Suggestion of response to answers

If answer is	, a facilitator may	
Correct	Thank and compliment.	
Half correct, half wrong	Repeat what is correct, don't mention what is	
	wrong.	
	Ask for other answers.	
Wrong	Thank for answering (do not say "It is wrong") then	
	ask for other answers.	
No answers	Review the question	
	Visualize the question	
	Rephrase the question so that people understand	
	more clearly	
	Ask one person to answer but don't force them.	
Out of topic	Find the opportunity to say thanks and tell that the	
	topic is also concerned by many people; however,	
	it should be discussed next time.	

Visualization skill

Every day, we receive information from outside by 5 human senses: taste, touch, smell, hearing and sight.

The proportions of information we receive by 5 human senses are 1% by taste (via tongue), 2% by touch, hold (via hands), 3% by smell (via nose), 11% by hearing (via ears), **83% by sight** (via eyes). Therefore, visualization so that people may receive information by sight is considerably important.

• Visualization ways:

- 1. By objects: effective however objects are not always available...
- 2. By models: effective but expensive.
- 3. By projectors: attractive but expensive.
- 4. By photos, pictures: attractive and affordable.
- 5. By projectors and computers: attractive but need to know how to use and because of rapid speed, viewers find it hard to remember.
- 6. By board and chalks or ink pens: simple but not flexile and are not able to store information.
- 7. By colour papers and big size paper (A0): relatively costly but effective for listeners, especially appropriate for event with participation.

• Advantages of visualization:

- Lively;
- Easy to understand;
- Easy to remember.

• Notes in visualization:

- Should use diagrams and tables;
- Diagrams: tree, fishbone diagram, mind map
- Photos, pictures: "An image worth 1000 sentences."

Tree diagram:



Fishbone diagram:



Mindmap



At present, visualization by color cards and A0 paper is considered the most effective way for every subject and used by many facilitators to facilitate participants in development activities.

Rule of writing on colour cards and A0 papers

How to write	Why? For what?
Write only 1 idea on 1 card.	To arrange cards with same ideas into a
	group.
Write maximum 3 lines on 1 card.	Because of small area. People can read clearly.
Write only keywords.	Writing long sentence comprises a large area and it is difficult to remember.
Write horizontally, should write	People find it easier to follow when reading
vertically.	the cards.
Write in lowercase or together with	Uppercase words are messy, take large
uppercase.	area and time-consuming.
Do not write in flying fonts.	Because flying fonts are difficult to read.
Use black or blue ink pens to write, use	Because red colour is uncomfortable to
red ink pens to highlight or decorate.	look at and read.
Same categorized ideas should be	To give a cohesive structure.
written in the same type of card.	

Participatory decision-making

• Benefits of participatory decision-making

- ✓ Is the way to give feasible and wise solutions;
- ✓ Help people understand each other;
- ✓ Create attachment;
- ✓ Help in sharing responsibility and raise awareness of responsibility;
- ✓

• "Diamond of participatory decision-making" and role of facilitators

In the beginning of participatory decision-making, thoughts of stakeholders are different. After debate, stakeholders will gradually understand each other and form nearly identical thoughts. At that moment, stakeholders are able to make the final decision together (called "diamond of participatory decision-making"). This diamond includes 4 stages: different thoughts, mumbling, same thoughts and decision-making.



Mumbling

"Different thoughts" stage

The need of "different thoughts" stage: in order to solve a very difficult problem, stakeholders should not only share same ideas or options but also brainstorm themselves in different ways. Thinking differently will broaden the range of ideas so that the problem can be discussed deeper.

The role of facilitators in "different thoughts" stage provides opportunities for people to raise their voices and share their ideas. In this stage, facilitators shouldn't try to ease disagreement and appreciate all ideas even if they are extremely varied. Moreover, facilitators shouldn't ask somebody to correct or reconsider his ideas.

 \Rightarrow To facilitate different thoughts, facilitators should:

- Help people not give hasty decision by showing restrictions in contributory ideas.
- Encourage people to raise their voices.
- Encourage various ideas, opinions...
- Respect all ideas and statements of people.
- Not ask people to reconsider or review their ideas.
- Encourage people to list difficulties and challenges...

"Mumbling" stage

Mumbling is the stage where all stakeholders have the same thoughts. At this stage, stakeholders often experience confusion and chaos. This is an important stage to share and adjust the prospect of the group to create common understanding.

The role of facilitators in "mumbling" stage: Facilitators should understand the dynamics of this stage and think about how to help stakeholders move from this stage to another stage in order to obtain participatory decision-making.

 \Rightarrow To facilitate "mumbling" stage, facilitators should:

Encourage mutual understanding. The more different the ideas are, the more confusion and misunderstanding appears. In "mumbling" stage, there's possibility facilitators are the only ones still listen. Therefore, facilitators should encourage people to continue discussion and debate in attempt to understand more about each other by:

- Helping one person protect his opinion from being overwhelmed by others;
- Handling misunderstanding;
- Encouraging people to continue debating and assure them that debate is normal;
- Encouraging people to share the same views.
- Appreciating responsive ideas and call for proposal ideas;
- Listening, being patient, flexible and having faith...

Same thoughts stage

What is "same thoughts" stage? When stakeholders build up mutual understanding, they have built up a consensus. At this time, group discussion becomes easier. Below are examples of what may happen in same thoughts stage:

- Someone gives an interesting idea;
- Other people explore to have better understanding of the above idea;
- Another person add comments on the above idea;
- Another one combines this idea with a total different idea.

This means stakeholders may combine other people thoughts with their own ideas in a practical way. In this circumstance, they walk on the same path to find out solutions, integrate needs and goals of all people. This kind of solutions shows that everybody has come to a consensus.

⇒ The role of facilitators in "same thoughts" stage: Help people discover possibilities as well as comprise them into a suitable solution for everyone.

Steps of participatory decision-making:

- 1. List problems, analyze context and meanings;
- 2. Discuss and agree on criteria to make decision;
- 3. Select decisions based on agreed criteria in step 2;
- 4. Continue choosing priority criteria (if needed)
- 5. Reviews results of decision-making;
- 6. Summarize and confirm that decision is made by majority and reflects mutual desire.

Feedback giving skill

Johary window

Free	Unable to see
Part that other people and you know	Part of you that other people know but you don't know – <i>feedback needed</i>
Hidden	Mystery
Part of you that you know but other people doesn't know – <i>Can you share about them?</i>	Part of you that other people and you haven't known (hidden talents)

Feedback	Is the way other people help you learn about your fuzzy part by telling you what they see in you but you are not able to see.
Sharing	Is the way you open up about yourself.
Discovery	Is a mysterious part of you that is suddenly revealed. Discovery often occurs without a reason and is unplanned.

In other words, the reason we recognize ourselves partly is from what other people tell us (via feedback).

What is a feedback?

Feedback giving is an act when an individual give information of **behaviours and** expression of others.

In participatory activities, feedback giving always exists.

Feedback giving is not aimed to make others feel self-satisfied; therefore, feedback giving is not over compliment.

Feedback giving has sincere goals, to help people really change their behaviour; therefore, feedback giving is also not critics or blame.

What is feedback giving aimed at?

Feedback giving is a way to help a person understand the influence of their behaviour to other people.

Feedback giving helps people adjust their behaviour towards the right subjective, by which, it contributes to comprehend their behaviour.

Feedback giving is also help you – with the role of a facilitator – work effectively with disadvantaged members in your group.

How to give feedback?

Feedback giving only receives positive response when it applies on certain criteria. Below are some suggestions to give contributory feedback:

Criteria	Bad example	Good example
 Be specific, not general 	You are always noisy!	Right when we are making decision, your talking distracts me.
 Be descriptive, not judgemental 	You only make me angry!	I wonder why you interrupt me.
3. Focus on behaviour (behaviour or attitude, not people	You are so ignorant!	When I was talking, you pouted. Therefore, I don't feel like talking anymore.
4. Focus on positive	You seldom smile	Your smile is beautiful, may

aspect, not pessimistic aspect		be you should smile more frequently.
 At right time and timely 	Last week	Recently

Overall, facilitators shouldn't delay feedback giving. Feedback giving is more beneficial when it is done right after observation because feedback receiver will remember specific situation of that feedback.

In conclusion, facilitators should give feedback with:

When ... (State specific action)...

I... (Describe your feelings)... Because ... (information that influences that action)...

Basic facilitation methods

Left brain and right brain

Our left brain is in charge of numbers and words. It is activated when receives activities related to logic, list and analysis. Whereas, right brain is used to receive melodies, images, colours, space and models.

Several forms of common education tend to use left brain more.

In contrast, facilitation methods are designed for us to mobilize both left brain and right brain to receive information more effectively.

Brainstorming method

Brainstorming is listing freely ideas and opinions, in which, ideas from anyone are equally respected.

Brainstorming rules

- ✓ Every idea is welcomed although some of them seem "silly" because there's chances that these ideas are foundation and suggestions for correct ideas;
- ✓ Strange ideas or ideas contrast to earlier ideas should be especially encouraged;
- ✓ Only list ideas but do not discuss, judge or criticize ideas of other people.
- ✓ Show relation and links of ideas;
- ✓ Facilitators should encourage people think about every aspect of a problem (advantage – disadvantage, pros – cons, strength – weakness...);
- ⇒ When is brainstorming used? When facilitators want to:
 - Evaluate understanding, experience of a group about certain issue;
 - Energize or break the ice: you can implement brainstorming method in a topic presentation, this is a quick method to help the whole group concentrate on thinking of an issue;

- Initiate a discussion; the group will quickly determine many sides of topic;
- Show the variety of ideas within a group;
- Create a wide range of ideas related to a difficult problem;
- . Collect all ideas after small group discussion.

Brainstorming by colour cards:

Facilitators should use this method when there is plenty of time, and when you want to mobilize individual thinking of each member, or when the topic is sensitive. Some suggestions:

- Visualize questions or topic need brainstorming;
- Tell them how many cards they have to write;
- Clarify that only one idea should be written in each card;
- Spend enough time for each member think about his answer and write them down on cards.
- Collect the cards and shuffle them;
- Read out loud each card (if time permits)
- Categorize card in group of same ideas;
- Name the groups of cards. Write the titles by cards with different colours or shapes;
- Conclude and summarize brainstorming results.

Brainstorming by visualizing ideas on board or A0 paper (big size paper):

This type of brainstorming should be used if there's only a short amount of time, when the topic is not sensitive and discussable in public.

- Visualize questions or brainstorming topic;
- Encourage participants to give answers or ideas as well as visualize them on board or A0 paper;
- Summarize and conclude.

Group work

What is working in group?

Group working is a discussion among members of a group to answer questions or to complete a task together.

The number of members in a group

It's advised to have more than 5 and less than 10 members in a group. If there are more than 10 members in a group, there's possibility that some members would not take part in group working. If there are less than 5 members in a group, the number of ideas is not big and working atmosphere could be less lively.

If there are too many people in a meeting and it's unavoidable to divide them into groups of more than 10-member group, facilitators may divide them into smaller group in discussion section.

A group with 7 members is considered the most effective one.

Some ways to divide groups: Upon events, facilitators may divide groups by different ways:

- Randomly divide;
- Divide based on locations;
- Divide based on ages;
- Divide based of expertise;
- Divide based on interest;
- Divide based on genders.
-

Group working time

Time for group in work could be long or short, depending on the complication level of the task for the group. Normally, time for group working is from 30-60 minutes.

Steps of group working

- State clearly questions or tasks of the group (should visualize questions or tasks);
- Divide groups and select leader and secretary (Leader is general operator, secretary writes reports and arrange ideas of the group as well as reminds working time). Specify location and for group working for each group;
- Clarify ways to share results of group working.
- Note: In each group, leader should encourage each member to give their own opinion (encourage brainstorming), guide the whole group to discuss ideas, then collect and make agreement. Each group should choose a member to present their group working results.

Ways to share results of discussion

- Each group reports their results: this is a good way to apply in reality.
- Exchange A0 papers presenting results of group working so that all groups read themselves.
- The first group presents result of their group discussion; the rest groups add contents that are different or not mentioned yet.

• Information market: Results of discussion are presented by the group themselves, other group come, read and note down important information themselves – this information is "bought".

"Should" 8	"Shouldn't"	when working	in group
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	Should	Shouldn't
1.	Everyone should participate in group	The fastest members and best at
	working not only the loudest.	speaking are the ones who speak
		more.
2.	Everyone has chances to speak their mind.	Every member frequently interrupts each other.
4.	Everyone should try to understand	Members ask challenging or provoking
4.	others by giving friendly question, for	questions.
	example "Do you mean this?"	
5.	A group is willing to receive conflicting	A group is not willing to receive
	opinions.	conflicting opinions.
6.	Every member listens to others'	Most of members don't listen while
	thoughts because they know that theirs	others' speaking because they are
	are also listened.	busy thinking about their own ideas.
7.	All members participate in discussion	Some members are silent in front of
	in order that other members	discussed topic; therefore, no one
	understand their views.	knows their views.
8.	Everyone is encouraged to express	The members with different views or
	their ideas.	minor ideas are not encouraged to
		express their opinions.
9.	A problem is only solved when all	A problem is solved when there's a
	members understand the cause of the	member comes up with the fastest
	solution.	answer.
10.	When a group reaches an agreement,	People think that a group only reach an
	that agreement reflects the most	agreement when all members have the
	general idea of the whole group.	same thoughts.

Flashlight method

How to perform:

- Facilitators ask short questions.
- Don't note down answers and comments.
- Don't comment on answer or judge.
- Can appoint someone to answer or ask for volunteer.

In flashlight method, participants express their feelings and views in a shortest way. For example, only answer or speak in one sentence. We can understand by its name, flashlight method is an action happening at a rapid speed.

Phillips xyz (consultation in place)

What is Phillips xyz?

This method is created by a French named Phillips:

- X: The number of members in a group
- Y: The time for a group to work (in minutes)
- Z: The number of ideas by each group.

Phillips xyz Objectives of Phillips xyz

- Diversify discussion ways.
- Create an exciting atmosphere.
- Help participants explore and share their experience in place.
- Initial screen through contributory ideas.

Notes

- The number of members in each group: only 3-4 members.
- Time for group discussion: 3-5 min.
- The number of ideas by each group: 1-2 ideas
- All groups may discuss one question or each group has a separate question.

Fish tank method

- Participants are divided into 2 groups. 1 group with less members sitting in a small round inside or in front, which is called fish tank, the rest group standing around in a bigger round or sit behind the first group, which is called observation group.
- "Fish tank" group discusses a topic.
- Observation group listens to the discussion while asking questions or sharing their ideas.
- Facilitators ask and summarize/visualize both groups' observation and ideas.

Role play (comprise and perform skits)

- The skits can be comprised beforehand or written by participants;
- Each group divides role and prepare for the skit.
- After each performance, other groups comment and conclude lessons from every skit.
- Roles in skits connect theory with practice, stimulate the interest of participants, encourage their analysis skills through self-evaluation and observing other people;
- Role player place himself into character's feelings in specific situation;
- All comments are towards the role not player so every participant can comment and give remark freely and comfortably.

Wish you luck!