

Staff Training Manual on Communication & Media

*Haryana Community Forestry Project
Haryana Forest Department*

Prepared by

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Training on

Communication & Media

**SESSION SCHEDULE, READING MATERIAL,
HANDOUTS**

Haryana Community Forestry Project

Training on Communication and Media

Session Schedule

Session No.	Duration	Session Details	Material Needed
Day 1			
	9-10 a.m.	Registration and Introduction. Training Objectives	
1	10-11 a.m.	Communication and media use under HCFP: Discussion & Presentation	Handout, OHP
	11-11.15 a.m.	Tea Break	
2	11.15-12 a.m.	Communication Process & Principles: Presentation & Discussion	Reading Material, OHP
3	12 – 1 p.m.	Communication Barriers & Breakdowns: Saboteur game followed by presentation	Handouts, Notes for participants, OHP
	1-2 p.m.	Lunch Break	
4	2-3.30 p.m.	Communicating with villagers: Role Play; What we do & What we don't; Case Study	Handouts
	3.30-3.45 p.m.	Tea Break	
5	3.45-4.30 p.m.	Importance of listening: Chinese Whisper	Message text, Handouts
6	4.30-5 p.m.	Evening exercise on Communicating an Idea to be presented next day	Handouts
Day 2			
7	9-11 a.m.	Communication Media: Advantages & Disadvantages: Communicating an Idea – group exercise	Charts, Marker Pens, Video camera, TV, Handouts
	11-11.15 a.m.	Tea Break	
8	11. 15-12.15 p.m.	Effective speaking: Exercise on delivering a motivational speech	Handouts, Video camera
9	12.15-1 p.m.	Organising Public Meeting: Tips	Handouts
	1-2 p.m.	Lunch	
10	2-3 p.m.	Organising Awareness Campaigns: Tips	Handouts
	3-3.15 p.m.	Tea Break	
11	3.15-4.30 p.m.	Important messages under HCFP & Areas of weaknesses in communication (for ITC staff) OR: Problems in adopting participatory process: Client-Consultant exercise for developing strategies (for SDFOs)	
	4.30-5 p.m.	Recap, Training Evaluation & Closing	

In case of SDFOs' batch, the training would be for three days. The first day would be for review the process of project implementation in the field, from Village Entry to Microproject Formulation. The main objectives are to reiterate the importance of participatory process; identify constraints which inhibit adoption of the process; help the participants develop solutions & strategies to overcome the constraints; delineate and emphasise the importance of SDFO's role in the process.

- Review the Approach & Stages of the HCFP process.
- Discuss the role of SDFOs at various stages, particularly keeping in mind the support need of the field staff during PA and Micro-planning.
- Problems & constraints being encountered in adopting the participatory process.
- Develop strategies to overcome the constraints
- Review of revised manuals on Village Entry, Participatory Assessment and Microplanning & Microproject Formulation

Session No.	Time	Session Details	Suggested Speaker/Facilitator
1	9-10 a.m.	Registration & Introduction	
2	10-10.30 a.m.	HCFP objectives, process, stages, time-frame and approach & Role of SDFOs: Presentation followed by discussion	Mr. S. K. Dhar
3	10.30-11 a.m.	Participatory process: Need and Importance in HCFP: Presentation followed by discussion	Mr. Göran Jonsson
	11-11.15 a.m.	Tea Break	
4	11.15-12 a.m.	Discussion on support needs of field staff to implement the process & role of SDFOs	Ajay Rai
5	12-1 p.m.	Constraints and solutions in adoption of participatory process & tools: group discussion	Ajay Rai
	1-2 p.m.	Lunch	
6	2-5 p.m.	Going through revised manuals for Village Entry, Participatory Assessment and Microplanning & Microproject Formulation	Ajay Rai

COMMUNICATION & MEDIA

Haryana Community Forestry Project (HCFP) is attempting to implement a process which would build the capacity of the village community to develop and manage their natural resources. The process is divided into nine phases where intensive interaction of different nature would take place between project staff and village community, sections of community and their representatives. The ITC division under the project has been established to support the operational staff by providing training to the villagers and communicating various aspects of the project to the civil society in general and the village community of the project villages in particular.

The importance of effective communication cannot be over-emphasised. The purpose of good and effective communication is to link people, modify behaviour, effect change, and achieve goals. Communication is the means by which people are influenced and linked together to achieve a common purpose. Group activity is impossible without communication because coordination and change cannot be effected without it. Distorted communication may result in conflict. Through proper communication one gets to know the needs and objectives of people. Communication is needed to: establish and disseminate goals; develop plans for their achievement; organise human and other resources in their most effective and efficient way; select, develop and appraise members; lead, direct, guide, facilitate, motivate and create a climate in which people want to contribute; control performance. Communication relates an institution/enterprise to its external environment. Furthermore, communication is vital in ***creating an environment in which people are motivated to work hard.***

The operational and ITC staff need to communicate with villagers at different levels – individual as well as group. The group may be a small group representing a section of the village community or members of the VRMC, the representative body of the whole community, or it could be large enough to include the whole village community or civil society in general. While the field staff, particularly a Forest Guard would be interacting on day-to-day basis with the villagers, interaction of others, such as an SDO or ITC staff, would be infrequent. Therefore the latter need to take more care in organising and delivering their messages to achieve the desired result.

Whether it is to influence villagers to change or to reduce the possibility of conflict in future due to differing perceptions, one needs to learn and adopt techniques of effective communication. In order to communicate effectively one needs to understand the communication process, be aware of factors that cause barriers and breakdowns in communication (in order to avoid them) and develop the habit of becoming an active listener and able speaker.

What is Communication?

Communication is the transfer of information from the sender to a receiver with the information being understood by the receiver. Communication tends to be clear when it is expressed in a language and transmitted in a way that can be understood by the receiver. The responsibility of the sender is to formulate the message so that it is understandable to the receiver. The responsibility pertains

primarily to written and oral communication and points to the necessity of planning the message, stating the underlying assumptions, realising the constraints and capabilities of the receiver and applying the generally accepted rules for effective writing and speaking.

Process of Communication

Any communication requires a medium to pass on information or message from a source or sender of it to the receiver of the same. In the case of a message being sent by a leader to his followers, the process would have three main components:

Leader, *the SOURCE* – MESSAGE – Follower, *the RECEIVER*

Leaders as well as followers filter the communication. The perception, in turn, may be influenced by various things, such as their education, cultural context, past experience, etc.

The message has three important elements which determine how well the thought the leader wants to convey is understood by the follower. They are:

Words -- phrases that the one selects to express the thought that one wants to communicate. They include vocabulary, language, phrases, sentence structure and sentence clarity. Careful selection of words is very important to convey the right meaning as well as achieve the desired effect. They can lead to costly errors, false hopes or disillusionment. At the same time it can inspire and motivate. It is important to note that the same word may have different meaning in different cultural contexts, different situations, and if spoken in different tone/volume.

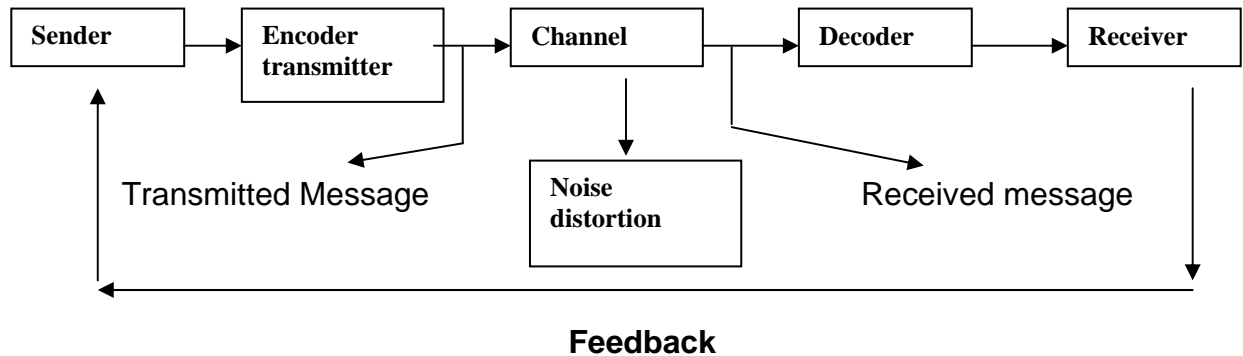
Paralanguage – characteristics of the voice such as rate of speech, diction, tone, rhythm and volume. One can speak a sentence such as “What are you doing?” in tones which can indicate genuine concern, indifferent inquiry, indignant questioning, or sarcastic query.

Non-verbal behaviour (Visuals) is anything which can be seen by the other person, such as gesture, facial expressions, eye contact, body language and positioning. One has to be careful of non-verbal communication. You may be saying “well done” with your words but sending a totally different message with your eyes, head, body language or even a sigh.

The process of the communication is completed when the message is received by the follower or the receiver and an appropriate feedback is sent to the source or leader. Feedback is the process by which the receiver communicates to the sender how he understands the message that was sent. As a leader, you must monitor both the message you are sending and followers' feedback. The perception of the message is also important.

Model of Communication Process

Message



The Encoding process refers to forming of the message to be sent and is influenced by the knowledge, beliefs, biases and feelings of the sender. An effective leader is aware of these influences and minimizes their effect in forming a message. The Channel is the medium for the message like voice, body language, television, computers etc. It is essential for effective communication that the channel is well accessible to the receiver. The Decoding represents assimilation and interpretation of the message that was sent. During this process the receivers' knowledge, beliefs, biases and perception affect how well the message is understood and accepted.

Communication Barriers and Breakdowns

In order to search for solutions of a problem, identification of the right problem is also necessary. It is generally said that right problem identification is half problem solved. Thus, a good communicator will look for problems of communication and then the root cause, instead of just dealing with symptoms. Barriers can be faced while sending, transmitting and receiving the information or while getting feedback. The specific communication barriers are:

1. **Lack of planning:** Good communication seldom happens by chance. A communication can be planned by giving proper thought to the message, audience, environment, etc. and then structuring it in such a way that the receiver can understand it as you want him to. Giving the reasons for a message, selecting the most appropriate channel, and choosing proper timing can greatly improve understanding.
2. **Unclear Assumptions:** Unclear assumptions that underlie most messages may result in confusion and loss of goodwill. The villagers have prepared a micro-plan for the overall development of their village with the help of the HCFP. They assume that HCFP would support everything contained in the micro-plan, including construction of *phirni*, hospital, school, street light, setting up small enterprises apart from creating the plantations. The HCFP would think that they are only supposed to support plantation on common and private land.

3. **Semantic (meaning) distortion:** This can be deliberate or accidental. They arise because of limitations of symbols with which we communicate. These could be in the form of words, pictures, actions etc. The Forest Guard may say that the villagers have to “participate” in the programme. He may think that participation means villagers would ‘contribute’ time, labour and money, whereas the villagers might think participation means only attending meetings called by the Forest Guard.
4. **Poorly expressed messages:** A good idea with poorly chosen words, omissions, lack of coherence, poor organization of ideas, awkward sentence structure, platitudes, unnecessary jargon and failure to clarify implications of the message can result in lack of clarity and precision of the message. It can be avoided by taking greater care while encoding the message.
5. **Loss by transmission and poor retention:** In the transmission process if the number of persons involved in transmitting the same message (in sequence) are too many, then the message becomes less and less accurate as it passes from one person to the other. Information retention is another serious problem with some receivers. Thus, it is sometimes necessary to repeat the same message and use different channels for communicating the same message.
6. **Poor listening and premature evaluation:** The importance of listening is discussed in detail later in the chapter. Poor listening habits are quite common. Listening demands full attention and self-discipline. It also requires that the listener avoids premature evaluation of what the other person has to say. A common tendency is to judge - approve or disapprove what is being said – rather than trying to understand the speaker’s frame of reference.
7. **Impersonal Communication:** Communication in an environment that creates openness and trust is likely to be more effective. Informal face-to-face discussion may work better than communication in a formal impersonal environment.
8. **Distrust, Threat and Fear:** Distrust, Threat and Fear undermine communication. Messages delivered under these conditions would be viewed with scepticism. The time spent in building trust and rapport can never be considered wasted. Under such circumstances, people tend to become defensive and conceal information.
9. **Information overload:** If a person keeps on eating without any restriction, such overeating may cause disorders in his/her body system; if a sender keeps on transmitting information without assessing the capacity of the receiver to grasp it, the receiver will be overloaded with it. The consequences can be:
 - Receiver may disregard certain information or be unable to retain most of it
 - Processing errors at any point while observing and interpreting
 - Delay in processing
 - Filter information

10. **Other barriers:** Other barriers could be *selective perception* of people, where they tend to perceive what they expect to perceive. They hear what they want to hear and ignore other relevant information. In villages quite often people remember what the project is going to provide free of cost to them, but are not aware of other aspects which require them to contribute. Closely related to it is the *prejudiced attitude*. If people have already made up their minds, they cannot objectively listen to what is said. The difference in *status* and *power* between sender and receiver may also result in communication barriers.

What is Effective Communication?

Effective communication is the ability to put a message in a way that people can easily understand and provide opportunities for appropriate feedback. An effective communication is always a two-way process consisting of receiving as well as providing information and feelings. There are many ways and means to effectively communicate depending on the situation and need (and socio-cultural background) of the people who are involved in it. An effective communication depends on the feelings, values, knowledge and beliefs of the sender as well as the external environment conditions that influence it.

Effective communication stems from the right combination of tone of voice, words, body language and pace of speech and actions. These four areas are the components of a person's communication style. We need to adapt our communication style in order to communicate effectively with others. Effective communication should help people in decision making and thus empower them to become dynamic rather than static. A proper direction and guidance with proper or timely feedback helps in increasing the effectiveness of the communication process.

In order to become an effective communicator, one needs to tune in not only words – and the way they are expressed – but non-verbal (body) language also.

Ways of Effective Communication

By and large there are five ways of communication, viz. listening, speaking, reading, writing and acting. Here we will concentrate on two components, i.e. listening and speaking because in the context of leadership in rural areas these are the widely used components. Apart from listening, speaking and doing, there are two other elements of communication, which are not so obvious. They are thinking and feeling. The effect of these spills over on the others and communicates itself without effort.

Listening

“We are given two ears, but only one mouth. This is because God knew that listening was twice as hard as talking.”

Listening is one of the most critical skills in the communication process for which least attention is given by an individual. Listening helps leaders to understand followers' needs, problems, moods or levels of interest.

Research also shows that people spend 45% of their communication time listening. Despite this an average listener understands and retains about half of what is said immediately after a presentation, and within 48 hours this level drops off to 22%.

The successful communicator will have not the loudest voice, but the readiest ear. A good communicator is a good listener.

While listening is as much an attitude as a set of activities, it is necessary to provide a structure for listening. Listening involves hearing, sensing, interpretation, evaluation and response. Avenues for listening should be regular and frequent. Providing the time, place and opportunities dedicated to listening needs to become a way of life for the leader. Such listening can and should take many different and varied forms: one to one, groups, one to many, etc. Through such means, leaders receive good ideas, as well as early warning signals when things are not going well. You and I can improve our listening habits. It will take concentration and hard work. Our listening habits are the results of years of often unconscious behaviour. Do we maintain eye contact? Do we really work at listening?

Listening is just the beginning. One must complete the feedback loop – that is to respond. It is crucial to get back to people after listening to them and the feedback needs not be so formal. Much of the benefit of listening is lost if this loop is not completed. Also, future success in getting good information from people depends on completing the feedback loop. One of the most important things in listening is not only to hear, but also to learn to hear selectively. Everything that is said is not of equal worth. The hearing is not selective in the sense of what is pleasing or what fits where the leader wants to go. Rather one must always listen for clues about positive directions to take or about uneasiness that may be present. One must be more than a collector of data; one must be a searcher for insights and clues. Most importantly, one must hear what is not being said. Some of the most important revelations come in what people choose not to say or in who does not speak.

Good listening includes a package of skills, which requires knowledge of technique and practice very similar to good writing or good speaking. Many people believe that good listening skills are easy to learn or automatically part of every person's personality. Neither is correct. The difference is that poor listening skills are often not as obvious to other people. If we cannot speak effectively, it is immediately obvious, but it may take a little time for other people to become aware that you or I are poor listeners. Poor listening habits are very common. Indeed, poor listening skills are more common than poor speaking skills. I am sure that you have seen on many occasions, two or more people talking to (by) each other at the same time. People cannot talk and be effective listeners at the same instance. What is not so obvious is when you and I are only paying partial attention or don't fully understand.

Good listening skills will vary from one communication situation to the next. For example, what is effective feedback will vary from one person to another. Some people to whom you are listening may need more feedback than other people

may. Listening skills can always be improved. Perfection in listening, just as in other communications skills, does not exist.

There are three basic listening modes: combative, attentive and reflective.

Most of us would describe our listening as attentive, that we are interested in the other person's point of view. In arguments one tends to adopt a combative mode. One tends not to hear other persons' points/reasons, but wants to promote one's own. All too seldom do we take the reflective mode in which we take an active roll in the communications process. We are not just passive vessels into which information is poured, but we think critically about the topics, the messages we receive. This is when real learning occurs.

Speaking

"Never speak more clearly than you think." Jeremy Bernstein

Under the project this would be a very common method of communicating with villagers. Whether it is to provide information or seek information or to develop understanding or to plan for activities and take decisions or to resolve conflicts that might arise.

Tips

- Keep it simple: Think in terms of a clear vision and some core values that you want to communicate at every opportunity, though in many different ways. The tune stays the same, but the message keeps changing. The tune must always remain simple if it is to be remembered.
- Make it memorable: Find fresh and memorable ways to communicate. Inventiveness with language and avoidance of a stereotyped style is important for leaders. Effective leaders use memorable phrases and metaphors. The tools to make it more memorable could be pictures, illustrations, symbols etc.
- Use every opportunity: See nothing as routine. Use every opportunity to tell the story, to tie many things to the central story and vision. It is not necessary that an agenda should be discussed only when a meeting is held. It could be discussed in an informal environment also.

Writing

The VRMC/S members may need to maintain resolution books, minutes of meetings, post notices, maintain information boards. These should be viewed as opportunities to practice wholesale sharing of information.

The symbol of sharing information is often as important as the actual information itself. Posting of minutes of board and committee meetings is perhaps more important in its symbolic value than in terms of how many people will actually read them. Sharing of financial information would result in increased confidence among the members.

Pictorial representation could be an effective way of representing information meant for the whole village. It would help those who cannot read or write to understand the message, and make them feel involved.

Actions

Actions (or Doing or Acting) are not ordinarily thought of as communication, but actions probably reflect the most powerful communication instrument available to the leader. There is a famous proverb that "*actions speak louder than words*". A pat on the back of the person whom you want to appreciate will convey the meaning itself or shaking hand to welcome someone.

Effective Communication in Groups

Most of the communication under the project would be done in groups – small or large. The following guidelines would help in effective communication in groups/committees:

- The size of the committee or the group, which is involved in discussing an issue, should neither be too large nor too small. Large groups increase the complexity of group dynamics, whereas the possibility in a small group is of coalition of a few against others. However, it is difficult to draw any precise conclusion about the appropriate size of the group. But at the time of forming a group it should be kept in mind that no one should dominate over others and also the group/committee is not so large that individual attention is not being given and everybody does not get an opportunity to contribute.
- The group should be representative of various interests and sections within the community.
- The representative member of the community should have the capability to communicate well and reach the group decisions by integrated group thinking rather than by inappropriate compromise.
- The chairperson of any committee meeting should initiate the planning of the meeting, prepare the agenda, see that outcomes of the previous happenings/works are available to the members ahead of time, formulate definite proposals for action, and conduct the meeting efficiently. The chairperson sets the tone of the meeting, integrates the ideas and keeps discussions on the track.
- Effective communication in the meeting requires information sharing over the outcomes and conclusions of the meeting. If a member could not attend the meeting due any reason, he/she should be informed of outcomes and conclusions as a matter of routine.
- The committee must be worth its cost. Intangible factors/benefits should be given equal importance than tangible. Intangible benefits/factors could be morale, enhanced status of committee members, etc.



PURPOSE OF COMMUNICATION IN HCFP

Information Sharing

Sensitisation – Generating Understanding

Mobilising Opinion

Generating Awareness

Generating Interest

Initiation of Community Action

Ensuring Participation

Developing Capability

Management of Group Processes

Negotiating Different Interests

Decision Making

Assessment of village condition

Planning

Conflict Resolution

Monitoring & Evaluation

SESSION 1: HANDOUT

Stage	Important Aspects	What can/should be Communicated	Important Messages	Media Use Measures
<p><i>Village Entry</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of mutual trust. • Understanding of Project among villagers. • Understanding of village by Project staff. • EPA selection. • Formal Permission from Panchayat/ Gram Sabha. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Objectives, Approach, Focus, Process, Strategies & Models. • Conditions under which project would work in the village. • Time frame of the project processes & activities. • How HCFP is different from other 'government schemes / projects' the villagers are accustomed to? • Role & responsibility for villagers & FD under the project. • Importance of commons and community action to rehabilitate & develop them for common benefits. • Advantages & disadvantages of Agro-forestry/tree plantation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main objective of the project is to develop community capability to develop and manage their resources. • Community capabilities essential for managing common resources. • Emphasis on marginal and weaker sections, but the whole community is to be involved. • The project process is directed towards building of community capability to develop and manage their own resources. • Success of the project would depend upon how well the project staff and the village community (and their representatives) jointly assess, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate. • Contribution of time and resources by villagers is an essential element of the project. • As the process is participatory and directed towards capacity building, the implementation would take some time to start. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gram Sabha meetings. • Focus group discussions. • Door-to-door visit with leaflet. • Posters. • Meetings with key persons/leaders. • Village plays. • Songs. • Participatory tools: Mapping, EPA Ranking.

Stage	Important Aspects	What can/should be Communicated	Important Messages	Media Use Measures
Participatory Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of village social, economic and natural resource condition. • Identification of problems for community & weaker/marginal sections. • Discussion on these problems leading to sensitisation and village level consensus on those problems. • Collection of baseline information. • Presentation of findings to the village community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need and Importance of the villagers to participate in the assessment process. • Nature and Objective of information to be collected. Process of information collection and analysis. • Tools & Techniques of information collection and analysis. • Outputs, conclusions and implications of the assessment. • Time frame of the project implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information collection process has been designed to make participation of every one possible – literate as well as illiterate. • The information belongs to the village and would be used by villagers for developing plan and micro-projects and analysing the project impact only. • Participation of all sections of the community is an essential aspect of the process as they may have different needs and problems. • Other messages may vary from village to village and may be determined by the outputs of the assessment process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Door-to-door survey. • Group meetings & discussions with different sections. • Discussion with key informants. • Gram Sabha meeting. • Participatory tools for assessment – Mapping, Diagramming and Comparing.

Stage	Important Aspects	What can/should be Communicated	Important Messages	Media Use Measures
VRMC/VRMS Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of VRMC/VRMS. • Selection of Link Workers. • Finalisation of Bye-laws. • Selection of VRMC/VRMS office bearers. • Tripartite Agreement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for a separate community institution for the project. • Institutional options. • Desired qualifications & characteristics of VRMC members. • Role of VRMC & its members. • Objectives & Bye-laws of VRMC/S. • Link Workers' ToR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VRMC's power and functions in relation to HCFP activities and management of common property. • Membership of VRMC is for common good and not personal benefit. • Villagers should organise their own resources before they look for outside resources. • VRMC does not encroach on Panchayat domain, rather it supports it. Good relationship between them is important to reach the goal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group discussion with different sections in the village. • Gram Sabha meeting. • Posters. • Model bye-law. • Link Workers' ToR. • VRMC meeting resolutions. • Panchayat resolution.

Stage	Important Aspects	What can/should be Communicated	Important Messages	Media Use Measures
Microplanning & Microproject Formulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Microplan & Microproject proposal. • Negotiate differences in priorities, problems, perceptions between sections within the community. • Sensitisation and consensus building across problems, solutions & strategies. • Approval of the Microplan and the various Microproject proposals in Gram Sabha meetings. • Microproject Joint Agreements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a Microplan? • Microplanning process and tools. • Problems related to different sections of the community. • Underlying causes of problems. • Solutions to the problems. • Goals related to the problems. • Extent of local and outside contribution. • Activity, resources, time-frame needed for implementation. • Activities that can be financially & technically supported by HCFP. • HCFP models. Suitable and preferred species for different plantation models. • Support sources for other activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microplan is the village level plan, prepared by villagers for village and resource development. • The responsibility to implement the plan rests primarily with the VRMC by identifying various sources of support. • HCFP would support only those plans that match its objectives, particularly those related to resource development. • Role & responsibility of villagers and HCFP during implementation of different micro-projects. • Consultation, decision making and progress review process. • Sanctioned budget for different micro-projects. • Time-frame for implementation of different micro-projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of VRMC members on Microplan preparation. • Participatory tools for Microplanning • VRMC meetings and resolutions • Microplan document. • Microproject proposals. • Gram Sabha meetings. • Exposure visits.
Microproject Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement approved microprojects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy and time-frame for implementation. • Role of VRMC/VRMS during implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of joint and separate responsibility during implementation. • Progress and problems during implementation. • Technology for planting & maintenance of plantations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VRMC/VRMS meetings and resolutions. • Gram Sabha meetings. • Training of VRMC/S members. • Training of villagers participating in microprojects. • Newsletter. • Exposure visits.

Stage	Important Aspects	What can/should be Communicated	Important Messages	Media Use Measures
Participatory Monitoring & Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitute village monitoring team. • Monitor and evaluate micro-plan, micro-projects and community capabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to monitor the capabilities and microplan progress by villagers. • Monitoring tools and process. • Community capabilities to sustain the process of resource development. • What is an empowered community? • Desired qualifications & ToR of monitoring team members. • System through which the learning can be discussed within the village and used to update the village micro-plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to monitor whether the goals and plans are being achieved or not. • The real test of the effectiveness of VRMCs would be in fulfilling the plans for which HCFP is not providing financial or technical support. • Community is in the best position to monitor these. • The purpose is to identify and agree on the area of weaknesses so that they can be overcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on PME. • Monitoring charts and logbooks. • Village Information Board. • VRMC meetings. • Group discussions. • Participatory monitoring tools.

The idea and need for a VRMC/S is introduced at the time of village entry, and discussed in detail during Participatory Assessment during discussions with different socio-economic sections within the village. During PA issues such as the need for joint effort by the community to resolve the problems, need for a separate village institution, representation of different sections in VRMC/S, qualification of such representatives etc. are discussed, together with identification of persons who could be effective representatives from different sections. Once the representatives are finalised, the bye-law could be discussed and finalised, while micro-planning is going on.

At every stage communication is kept open with Panchayat.

Media Being Used for Communication under HCFP

Verbal Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gram Sabha Meetings • VRMC meetings • Group Discussion • Door to Door visits • Discussion with Key Persons & Village Leaders • Training Programmes • Workshops
Verbal-visual media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory tools for assessment, planning and monitoring • Exposure visits
Visual Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photographs • Posters • Stickers
Audio-visual Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video-films • Drama & Plays • School level programmes
Audio Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio programmes • Folk songs / Ragini containing audio cassettes
Written Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wall painted Slogans • Leaflets • Agreements; Resolutions; Contracts; Bye-laws; Records; Reports; Plans • Letters • Village Information Boards • Calendar • Diary • Newsletter • Journal (Haryali) • School level competition (Quiz) • Newspaper reports

Discussion Questions

- Which of the listed medium / methods have you used under the project for communication and for what purpose?
- What are the advantages and limitations of the listed methods & media?
- How many Gram Sabha or VRMC meetings or VRMC training programmes have you participated in and what was your role?
- What was the nature of your involvement during Village Entry, Participatory Assessment and Micro-planning process in project villages?

Effective communication exists between two people when the receiver interprets and understands the sender's message in the same way the sender intended it.

Sources of Difficulty by the Speaker

- Voice volume too low to be heard.
- Making the message too complex, either by including too many unnecessary details or too many issues.
- Getting lost, forgetting your point or the purpose of the interaction.
- Body language or non-verbal elements contradicting or interfering with the verbal message, such as smiling when anger or hurt is being expressed.
- Paying **too much** attention to how the other person is taking the message, or how the person might react.

Sources of Difficulty by the Listener

- Being preoccupied and not listening.
- Being so interested in what you have to say that you listen mainly to find an opening to get the floor.
- Formulating and listening to your own rebuttal to what the speaker is saying.
- Listening to your own personal beliefs about what is being said.
- Evaluating and making judgements about the speaker or the message.
- Not asking for clarification when you know that you do not understand.

General Communication Techniques

- Focus on the person
- Avoid judging the person
- Be aware of the feelings of the individual
- Show you understand what is being said
- REPHRASING/CLARIFYING
 - If I hear you correctly, you're saying that...
 - Let me see if I understand what you've been saying...
 - From what you've said, it seems that...

Communication Barriers and Breakdowns

1. Lack of planning
2. Unclear Assumptions
3. Semantic (meaning) distortion
4. Poorly expressed messages
5. Loss by transmission and poor retention
6. Poor listening and premature evaluation
7. Impersonal Communication
8. Distrust, Threat and Fear
9. Information overload
10. Selective perception & prejudiced attitude
11. Difference in status and power between sender and receiver

Tip box

The project conditions for working together should be made very clear from the beginning. Unilateral changes in the 'rules of the game' should be avoided.

Never.... never...never make a promise you can not keep...and once a promise is made try to keep it. Excuses, howsoever genuine, would break the fragile trust.

Work as a team. Try to avoid giving different or conflicting versions of the same thing.

Communication Skills Training Received by an Average Person

SKILLS	YEARS OF TRAINING	EXTENT USED IN ADULT LIFE
Writing	14	Little
Reading	8	Some
Speaking	1	Quite a bit
Listening	0	A great deal

The figures may be lower for people in rural areas, particularly women.

Benefits of Active Listening

- Sometimes a person just needs to be heard and acknowledged before the person is willing to consider an alternative or soften his/her position.
- It is often easier for a person to listen to and consider the other's position when that person knows the other is listening and considering his/her position.
- It helps people to spot the flaws in their reasoning when they hear it played back without criticism.
- It also helps identify areas of agreement so the areas of disagreement are put in perspective and are diminished rather than magnified.
- Reflecting back what we hear each other say helps give each a chance to become aware of the different levels that are going on below the surface. This helps to bring things into the open where they can be more readily resolved.
- If we accurately understand the other person's view, we can be more effective in helping the person see the flaws in his/her position.
- If we listen so we can accurately understand the other's view, we can also be more effective in discovering the flaws in our own position.

Three basic listening modes

Competitive or Combative Listening happens when we are more interested in promoting our own point of view than in understanding or exploring someone else's view. We either listen for openings to take the floor, or for flaws or weak points we can attack. As we pretend to pay attention we are impatiently waiting for an opening, or internally formulating our rebuttal and planning our devastating comeback that will destroy others' arguments and make us the victors.

In Passive or Attentive Listening we are genuinely interested in hearing and understanding the other person's point of view. We are attentive and passively listen. We assume that we heard and understand correctly but stay passive and do not verify it.

Active or Reflective Listening is the single most useful and important listening skill. In active listening we are also genuinely interested in understanding what the other person is thinking, feeling, wanting or what the message means, and we are active in checking out our understanding before we respond with our own new message. We restate or paraphrase our understanding of their message and reflect it back to the sender for verification. This verification or feedback process is what distinguishes active listening and makes it effective.

Attributes of Good Listening

The following attributes of good listening are suggestive of the skills needed. There is some overlap between the various attributes, but each suggests something different.

1. ***Concentration.*** Good listening is normally hard work. At every moment we are receiving literally millions of sensory messages. We have to reduce almost all of these and concentrate on the verbal sounds (and visual clues) from one source. And this concentration is something that most of us have not been thoroughly trained in how to do. Focus your attention - on the words, ideas and feeling related to the subject. Concentrate on the main ideas or points. Don't let examples or fringe comments detract you. All of this takes a conscious effort.
2. ***Attention.*** Attention may be defined as the visual portion of concentration on the speaker. Through eye contact and other body language, we communicate to the speaker that we are paying close attention to his/her messages. All the time we are reading the verbal and non-verbal cues from the speaker, the speaker is reading ours. What messages are we sending out? If we lean forward a little and focus our eyes on the person, the message is we are paying close attention.
3. ***Eye contact.*** Good eye contact is essential for several reasons: First, by maintaining eye contact, some of the competing visual inputs are eliminated. You are not as likely to be distracted from the person talking to you. Second, most of us have learned to read lips, often unconsciously, and the lip reading helps us to understand verbal messages. Third, much of many messages are in non-verbal form and by watching the eyes and face of a person we pick up clues as to the content. A squinting of the eyes may indicate close attention. A slight nod indicates understanding or agreement. Finally, our eye contact with the speaker is feedback concerning the message: Yes, I am listening, I am paying attention. I hear you. Remember: a person's face, mouth, eyes, hands and body all help to communicate to you.
4. ***Receptive Body Language.*** Certain body postures and movements are culturally interpreted with specific meanings. The crossing of arms and legs is perceived to mean a closing of the mind and attention. The nodding of the head vertically is interpreted as agreement or assent. Too close and we appear to be pushy or aggressive and too far and we are seen as

cold. Likewise there are many body languages indicating the receptiveness of the message

5. ***Understanding of Communication Symbols.*** A good command of the spoken language is essential in good listening. Meaning must be related to the words. For a single word used in different context and at different place might mean different things. You as the listener must concentrate on the context of the usage in order to correctly understand the message. The spoken portion of the language is only a fraction of the message. Voice inflection, body language and other symbols send messages also. Thus, a considerable knowledge of non-verbal language is important in good listening.
6. ***Openness.*** We should be open to the message the other person is sending. It is very difficult to be completely open because each of us is strongly biased by the weight of our past experiences. We give meaning to the messages based upon our knowledge. Talk to someone from a different culture and watch how he gives meaning to words. Or another listening challenge is to listen open and objectively to a person with very different political or religious or ideological beliefs. Can you do that? Really? It is wonderful if you can and if you cannot, it is time to start because in working with villagers you may need to listen to and understand opinions quite contrary to your own.
7. ***Restating the message.*** Repeating and re-framing the message as part of the feedback can enhance the effectiveness of good communication. A comment such as: "I want to make sure that I have fully understood your message...." and then paraphrase in your own words the message. If the communication is not clear, such a feedback will allow for immediate clarification. It is important that you state the message as clearly and objectively as possible.
8. ***Questioning/Clarifying.*** Questions can serve the same purpose as restating the message. If you are unclear about the intent of the message, ask for more information after allowing sufficient time for explanations. Don't ask questions that will hurt, embarrass or belittle the other person. Only part of the responsibility is with the speaker. You have an important and active role to play also. If the message does not get through, it means that two people have failed; first the speaker and then you as an active listener.

9. *Empathy*. As a good listener if you want to understand the other person, it is not necessary that you become like him/her. Try to put yourself in the speaker's position so that you can see what he/she is trying to get at.
10. *Strategic Pauses*. Pauses can be used very effectively in listening. For example, a pause at some points in the feedback can be used to signal that you are carefully considering the message, that you are "thinking" about what was just said.
11. *Don't Interject*. There is a great temptation at many times for the listener to jump in and say in essence: "Isn't this really what you meant to say." This carries the message: "I can say it better than you can" or "Do not bother. I know what you are trying to say". This may choke any further messages from the speaker. Often, this process may result in situation in which each person tries to dominate and let the other be suppressed. This may result in little communication.
12. *Leave the Channel Open*. A good listener always leaves open the possibility of additional messages. A brief question or a nod will often encourage additional communications.
13. *You cannot listen while you are talking*. This is very obvious, but very frequently overlooked or ignored. An important question is why are you talking: Whether to gain attention to yourself or to communicate a message?

Motivational Speech/Talk

Motivational or persuasive speech/talk is an important tool in a project context. Whenever there is an attempt to change -- modifying behaviour, introducing new systems & technologies -- there is resistance. One may need to use it to influence, motivate or convince villagers to participate in the project process and activities by contributing time and resources and make them agree for change. The purpose is to make the audience act as you request -- and they act only when we are able to win both their minds & hearts.

TECHNIQUE

Step One

First & Foremost: Establish an "I AM OK, YOU ARE OK" position with them by first few sentences without touching the subject.

"I am so glad to be with such committed persons."

Step Two

Start speech from a point of agreement. Everyone should say / feel "YES" !

"We need to make our village a better place to live."

Step Three

Slowly move towards points of disagreement -- in small steps. As you move on, shift from MIND-REASONS to HEART REASONS.

"Self-help is best help. We are residents of the same village. If the village develops our life would be easier. We all would benefit from it. Nobody is going to help us unless we help ourselves. We need to get together and think how we can make our village a better place to live. Things are bad nowadays unless we hold our hands together we would never be able to 'cross the river' safely. There are a lot of changes happening in other villages, through community institutions. HCFP has provided us an opportunity to develop our own institution for development of our resources. Let us grab this opportunity or the opportunity may be lost....."

Keep Eye contact, watch their Body – Language.

Step Four

The moment you feel you have them nodding with you, without wasting any more words. **Ask them!** Request them for a clear-cut action, to be done - **Today !**

"Shall we all decide and commit today to make our institution a success by becoming its members and contributing our time and resources for a common purpose. Let us all contribute a token of Rupees Ten as membership fees."

Step Five

Presume that they have all agreed. Say that you have full faith that they will do as agreed, thank them and close.

" And now that we have resolved to do the right thing, I am sure everyone.."

Remember ...

- Use maximum of "WE". We know. We are. We should. We wish.
- Never shoot arrows more than necessary.
- Try overkill and you may loose, Stretch it and it breaks.
- One HUMAN STORY is more powerful than hundreds of arguments, thousands of facts & figures.
- Use ANECDOTES, SLOGANS, POETRY and PROVERBS.

ACE FORMULA

First: APPRECIATE
Then: CRITICIZE
Finally: ENCOURAGE

Hypothetical Case: *The Story of Community Forestry Project in "Purakhatta Aam Pur" Village*

Village 'Purakhatta Aam Pur' was selected for a community forestry project. The norms and conditions, objectives & process, approach and strategies of the project were the same as those of HCFP.

The villagers were somewhat indifferent and unaware of the whole thing when the local SDFO landed one day in the village, along with a Forester and a Forest Guard, and met the Sarpanch to inform him of the intention of the project to work in his village. The Sarpanch and a few other persons were more enthusiastic. They hoped that at least it would generate some employment during plantation, if nothing else.

The SDFO informed that the project would be doing much more than that. They would be giving free fruit and other seedlings desired by farmers to plant on their farm land. In some cases, they would also provide incentives of Rs. Two per surviving plant in second year and Rs. Three in the third year. They have a provision of Rs. 15,000/- to be given to the village for any work the villagers want to undertake. They would also construct a Chetna Kendra with an investment of Rs. One Lakh in the village. Plus they would create plantations on common land. The village would also be given Rs. Thirty Thousand through a committee, which would be formed by the project to look after the plantations after three years. Plus there are more things under the project.

The Sarpanch assured the team that he would provide all possible support to the project. A meeting was called, in which not many people turned up, and the models and benefits of the project were explained. Those who attended were quite happy that they would get fruit seedlings of their choice free of cost and the general opinion was that the 'scheme' seems good. One of the villagers said that previously plantations were taken up on the Panchayat land but the results were not very good. The SDFO told the villagers that things are 'different' in this project. The Sarpanch later told the team that the person is a 'nuisance' and similarly tries to block development projects in the village. He is a frustrated person.

The SDFO asked the Sarpanch to identify at least 10 ha. of Panchayat land where a Village Wood Lot can be created by the project. The Sarpanch told him that he would look into the matter. The team went back happy and satisfied with the start they had made in the village and promising that they would be back soon to start work in the

village. Before going back, the Forest Guard tried to find out if it is possible for him to stay in the village, as it would be easier for him to stay there and work.

After three days, the Forest Guard came and started living in the village. He went to meet the Sarpanch, who told him that he has been thinking about some things for which the project could provide support. The Guard told him that it would be better if more persons are involved in the discussion. Later in the evening a meeting of important persons in the village was called at the Sarpanch's residence.

The Forest Guard explained that at the stage of village entry, the project had a provision of Rs. 15, 000/- for any activity the villagers want to take up in the village. There were various suggestions ranging from Bus Shelter to Street Light to "Phirni" to Veterinary Hospital. Everyone felt that the amount of money being provided by the project is very little. The Forest Guard explained that it is just a 'token' amount, and more would come later. He asked them to agree on something, and then the money would be released. The Sarpanch asked whether the money would come to the Panchayat. The Forest Guard told that they should tell him what is to be done and he would get it done. If the expense is more than 15,000/- Rupees, then they should consider contribution from the Panchayat or households. The Sarpanch said that he would discuss it with others, and would inform him later on.

One week after the last discussion, the Forest Guard was going to meet his SDFO. On the way, at the bus stand, he saw the Sarpanch, and asked him whether they have decided on the work to be undertaken. The Sarpanch told him that they had not. The main difficulty is that all those things that they want require much greater expense than what the project is providing, and chances of contribution is little. The Forest Guard suggested that probably they should try to get some Utensils for the Dharamsala that can be used for cooking during marriage reception. They can buy as much as they want for 15,000 Rupees. He also said that if it is agreeable to him, he would inform the SDFO as such during their meeting. The Sarpanch felt it was a good idea.

During the next few days, the Forest Guard came to meet other persons in the village. The list of Utensils was finalised, and the Forest Guard took the responsibility to buy it for them. Some persons thought that probably the money could have been used much more fruitfully, but kept the thought to themselves. Harijans in the village hoped that probably the project would provide utensils for the Harijan Dharamsala too.

The Forest Guard had a tough time explaining to the Harijans why the project would not be providing any more utensils. The SDFO again visited the village and asked the Forest Guard to confirm the availability of Panchayat land for plantation. He was troubled by what he had heard. Two persons from the village had visited him. While talking about

availability of common land, he was told that there is only three ha. of very degraded land available. He also asked to start collecting all information and data required under the project and complete the Participatory Assessment.

The Forest Guard discussed the matter with some individuals. An ex-Sarpanch was quite helpful in explaining the existing situation. It came out that a lot of land is under encroachment by individual households for one thing or the other. On some portion some trees stand from an earlier plantation taken up by Social Forestry. About 20 ha. of Panchayat land is irrigated, and is given on lease. When the matter was taken up with Sarpanch, he told that he would immediately make a resolution if the Forest Guard takes care of his 'interest'. The Forest Guard started wondering what that interest may be? He decided to consult his senior and more experienced colleagues about it.

The Forest Guard explained in one of his visits to the Sarpanch that the project needs to collect some information from all the households, and prepare some Maps. For the purpose two men and two women would be employed by the project on daily wage basis. Then two persons would be employed as Link Workers for three years by the project. Four persons were identified by the Sarpanch, including his nephew, for the purpose. The household survey started. Some of them reported to the Forest Guard that in some houses they are not giving the correct information, as they feel that the information would be used by the Government to tax them. The Maps and other matrices were not much of a problem. The enumerators made some of the village social and resource maps, taking help of some children studying in the village school. The Forest Guard tried to involve some more persons in discussions. He also needed to collect some information from the village women.

However, things were slow till one day the SDFO came to the village and informed that project activities would not be carried out till the data collection process is completed, a committee is formed and availability of common land for plantation is ensured. He also took up the matter of common land for a VWL with the Sarpanch. The Sarpanch identified a patch that might serve the purpose of the project. He also suggested that the patch planted by Social Forestry had failed and if the project helps him to get permission for harvest and sale of the remaining trees, that patch can also be replanted. The encroachers were unwilling to leave their encroachments. Each wanted others to leave first. The Sarpanch felt that being a government department the FD is in the best position to remove the encroachers. The SDFO said he would see what he could do.

Meanwhile, a meeting was called one day to form the VRMC. There were some individuals who wanted to be in the committee. As the Sarpanch could not be the Chairperson, he was not interested. The ex-Sarpanch was made the Chairperson, with

which the Sarpanch was not very happy, but he kept it to himself. He tried to ensure that at least the other positions should go to his known supporters. The Forest Guard explained that they should also have representation from the women and SC, as per the project norm. The Sarpanch's wife was made the Vice-Chairperson.

The Forest Guard was asked in one of the departmental meetings that he should try and find out the fruit seedlings the villagers want to plant in their homestead and the tree species they would like to plant in their farm. Such an information was already available, as the door-to-door survey was already complete. The common land was still a problem. The CF was coming on inspection tour of the area. The SDFO thought it would be good to take him to the village. The VRMC Chairperson and the Sarpanch were informed a day before. The Sarpanch who had some other engagements was persuaded to stay.

Next day the meeting took place. The attendance was quite good, and the CF talked to the villagers. He said that if villagers co-operate with the project, things would be much better. Unlike other projects, here they would only do things desired by the people. The VRMC should ensure that villagers participate in the project, because unless they participate, the project would not be successful. Each and every household should pay five Rupees to the VRMC to become its general body member. The project would be implemented through the VRMC. The VRMCs would be given Rs. 30,000/- to carry out their activities. The Link Workers are the employees of the VRMC, for which the project is paying Rs. 1,200/- per month.

Some of the villagers said they wanted to plant Poplar, but they have not been given any seedlings. Others, from the VRMC, said they have not yet received Rs. 30,000. One of the Link Workers complained that they have still not been given any salary. The C.F. told them that the project has made a policy to pay the money only if the membership fees from 50% of the households are collected and if a Village Woodlot is planted. This was news to the villagers. Some of them said 'goodbye' to Rs. 30,000/-.

The issue of common land availability was taken up. The C.F. who had visited the site while coming to the village was not happy with the patch of land, it was inadequate and severely degraded. He was not very interested in getting into removing the encroachment. He asked why don't they provide the land leased by the Panchayat for plantation. The first reaction of the Sarpanch was negative. He thought that trees take a lot of time in providing returns, whereas from leasing of land for agriculture, the Panchayat gets annual return. Sensing this the C.F. clarified that they can get annual returns from trees too, if they plant fruit trees such as Beri. This seemed to be a good suggestion and the villagers were interested. They had seen some of the individuals in their village making good money from Beri plantation. It was agreed that they would provide five ha. of leased land, provided the project takes up Beri plantation there.

Meanwhile, the DFO received a letter from the head office asking for Participatory Appraisal and Micro-plan documents of project villages. He in turn wrote to the SDFO asking him to submit the reports within five days. The SDFO asked the Forest Guard, who came down to his office with matrices and maps and diagrams. The SDFO could not make sense of much of it. He was confused, and thought why the hell do they need to write these things? What is its relevance? How can they help?

The Forest Guard in the village was having problems. He had a tough time explaining why the project has decided not to provide Poplar seedlings to those who wanted it. He tried to say that the area is not suitable for it, but the villagers had seen others planting on their own and succeeding. He was also troubled when he heard that Beri plantation cannot be raised under VWL. Instead the project is now proposing to plant Ailanthus.

The villagers were, on their part, troubled that the Forest Guard is bringing in labour from outside, and those who need work in the village are deprived of it. They were more troubled when they had to go to the Nursery to collect the seedlings and found there that they are not getting the species they wanted in sufficient numbers, and instead were being given seedlings of some other species about whose utility they were not quite sure.

A consultant who provided training happened to meet some project staff after these things had happened. He was interested to know how successfully the participatory process and approach is being adopted by them. He was told by the Forest Guard that it may have been useful if the villagers were more educated. In the present context it is impractical. Nowadays everyone thinks of personal benefit, and no one is interested in common benefit. Though he said he had managed to get the maps prepared by villagers, neither he nor the villagers could see any practical use of them. He also felt that the village should not have been selected for the project, as common land is not available. The SDFO felt that the staff have not properly understood the tools and techniques for participatory appraisal and microplanning, and have some difficulty in applying them. He felt that probably they need more training.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think the problems arose in the village?
2. Can you identify instances of ineffective communication in the case presented above?

What we do and don't do: Factors Leading to Ineffective Communication.

What we do	What we don't do
Lecture	Listen
Meet few	Meet all
Interrupt others while talking	Encourage others to talk
Meet those who are easily available	Meet those who are not easily available
Make promises	Keep promises
Make unprepared speech	Prepare our speech
Distribute leaflets	Discuss contents of leaflets
Provide	Take feedback
Use vague, general and unfamiliar words	Use local, familiar and specific words
Use our judgements	Understand villagers' perception
Impose our ideas	Understand villagers' needs
Ask close-ended questions	Ask open-ended questions
Consult	Implement

Tip box: Style of questioning

Very often the way in which questions are asked can build or destroy trust.

What are known as open questions encourage people to say what they think. Open questions start with the important words:

**What... When... Where... Who... How...
Why...**

Both for interaction with local people and also interaction with field staff, this style of open questioning can help to build understanding and openness.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO BEFORE HOLDING A MEETING?

List guidelines for what you should do before holding a meeting. Use the box below to help provide ideas.

Discuss and agree on the issues these with your staff. When you have agreed on the guidelines, ensure that everyone uses them in their work.

What must be done before a meeting

- Arrange the meeting in advance and inform people in advance if there is any change in programme*
- Check that the time is convenient*
- Make sure people know the purpose of the meeting, and who should attend (this is when the meeting has been convened by staff rather than by villagers)*
- Make sure on the day before the meeting is to take place that it is still possible to hold it*
- Make sure that women are able to attend the meeting and that you are holding the meeting at a time and place convenient for them*
- Make sure you have all the necessary equipment – such as pens, charts, paper*
- Follow up all the actions you agreed at the last meeting before going to the next meeting*
- Make sure that any necessary government or other non-government staff are able to attend*
- If villagers call you to a meeting you should attend*

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO DURING A MEETING?

List out guidelines for what you should do during meetings. Use the ideas in the Box.

When you have agreed on the guidelines, ensure that you and your staff use them in your work.

What to do during meetings

- ☞ Do not arrive late. Respect people's time and go to the village when you said you would.
- ☞ Be patient! Trust cannot be built in a day.
- ☞ Do not hurry meetings.
- ☞ Conduct meetings in a school or other public meeting place and not at the house of one particular person (you may exclude other people from attending the meeting, particularly if it is at the house of a wealthy person).
- ☞ Make sure that everyone sits together with no separation (preferably with some on chairs and others sitting on the floor).
- ☞ Do not carry on too long. If people are busy or they show a lack of interest, come back another day at a mutually agreed time.
- ☞ Value other people's time. If an exercise cannot be finished within a reasonable amount of time, come back at another time to complete it.
- ☞ Spend time with different interest groups to build up their understanding, confidence and trust. Hold separate group meetings with interest groups that are particularly dependent on the resource. Ensure that their needs are highlighted and brought into the planning process.
- ☞ Conduct separate exercises with women and men to highlight their different needs. Women, who are often shy in public in front of men, will then be able to speak out with more confidence.
- ☞ At the end of each meeting there should be a public/group's agreement to continue or not - the facilitator should constantly check that everyone is agreed to both the process and the outcome.

Tip box

Making a record of meetings

Make sure a clear record of the meeting is kept recording:

- Who attended
- What was done (i.e. what exercises were carried out or what discussions held)
- What decisions were taken
- What actions were agreed and who is responsible
- Date of next meeting

ROLE PLAY

Role A (Sarpanch)

You are the Sarpanch of the village where HCFP has been working since last six months. Initially you had hopes that the project might do something good for the village, but with time the hopes have turned into misgivings. To start with, the project staff had discussed various problems in the village and everyone had started thinking that probably the project would help them solve these problems – at least some of them. But now they are talking only of plantation. You feel all this talk about solving the problems was just an 'appearance' and the real motive was only to take up plantation.

You also feel that they are marginalising you and come to you only when they want Panchayat resolutions. The project has constituted a committee, to which they want the Panchayat to hand over Panchayat land for plantation. Even your suggestions for Link Workers were not entertained. All the talk about villagers making their own plan was humbug. You hear the plan has already been prepared, but no one in the village knows about it. You feel that the VRMC Chairperson and the local Forest Guard have formed some sort of alliance and would not properly use the money which is to be allocated for your village.

Today there is a meeting in the village and a forest officer is coming. You have been requested to attend the meeting, where you plan to make your feelings clear to the forest officer when you meet him in the meeting.

Role B (Forest Officer)

You are a Forest Department Officer working for HCFP. In the village your project and you have come to know that the Sarpanch is not happy with the work your project has undertaken and hence he is creating problems in giving the Panchayat land for village woodlot plantation. You, however, think his unhappiness relates more to his interest not being served. You also suspect that the Sarpanch thinks that his position is getting undermined due to activities of the project, such as formation of a VRMC whose Chairperson is an ex-Sarpanch and an opponent of the current Sarpanch. Today there is a village meeting, where you will meet the Sarpanch. You plan to have a long talk with him and make him agree to cooperate with the project, as he had promised when project staff first came to the village.