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Development Program Management Center

THE ACTION-TRAINING APPROACH TO PROJECT IMPROVEMENT
GUIDELINES FOR THE TRAINER

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PREFACE

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This reference guide is written for trainers who will be facilitating "action-training" or "action-planning" workshops. The focus in these workshops is on the establishment of management systems and practices to successfully implement development projects and programs. Action-training has been used extensively with project teams to design, implement and evaluate projects.1/ Action-planning workshops have been used for sector reviews and development program and project planning.2/ These action oriented methods are practical, flexible, effective ways to meet immediate organizational needs while simultaneously improving the long-term management capacity of the participating teams.

Action-training methods have been developed, refined and applied by USDA/DPMC (Development Program Management Center) staff in Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Chad, Burkina Faso, Jamaica, and other African and Caribbean countries. Action-training has been used with many diverse projects and has proven its value in making project teams more efficient and effective instruments for carrying out development efforts.

The purpose of this manual is to guide the trainer in planning successfully, using an action-training approach. Both beginning and more experienced trainers will find it useful for stimulating new ideas and guiding their efforts.

1/ The trainer should also read the companion document entitled Planning for Successful Project Implementation. Guidelines for the Project Team (available from DPMC). This companion document prepares project team members for action-training workshops during which they develop the project's technical and managerial foundations.

2/ "Action-planning Workshops for Development Management-Guidelines" Jerry Silverman, Merlyn Kettering, and Terry D. Schmidt, World Bank Technical Paper No. 56

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Merlyn Kettering of USDA/DPMC pioneered an action-training approach in his work with Jamaican ministries and through his work on performance management, financial management and development management in African, Asian and Caribbean nations. Morris Solomon, as USDA/DPMC Director, has been instrumental in linking training to project management methods for the special needs of developing countries. Marcus Ingle, Director of the University of Maryland's International Development Management Center, has been associated with integrating generic management principles to action-training and performance improvement strategies. Consultants Wilfred Owens, Robert Zimmerman and R. Moses Thompson are among the growing cadre of effective action-training facilitators.

This manual is based on the authors' work with projects in Thailand and Indonesia. In Thailand, U.S.A.I.D. project officers Frank Gillespie, Dr. Jerry Wood, John Foti and Dr. Charles Alton applied these methods to their projects. Mission Directors Donald Cohen and Robert Halligan were highly supportive of efforts to improve project effectiveness; Chamroen Tansomboon helped adapt the concepts to the Thai environment. In Indonesia, U.S.A.I.D. project officers Dr. Martin Hanratty, Dr. Abraham Hirsch, Robert Dakan and Frank Gillespie have used action-training approach in their projects.

To you, my friends and colleagues, from whom I have learned so much, my thanks.

CHAPTER ONE: ACTION-TRAINING PERSPECTIVES

WHY ACTION-TRAINING IS EFFECTIVE

Most development projects involve temporary organization forms to accomplish ambitious objectives. By their very nature, development projects are complex, unique, "adventures into uncertainty" which face numerous obstacles along their path to success.

Project success requires paying special attention to the organizational and management dimensions of the project as well as to its technical aspects. When projects fail to achieve their objectives, the cause is often a management rather than a technical reason. That is, failure frequently results from the inability to set clear and realistic objectives; coordinate the many organizations and individuals involved; develop timely implementation schedules, budgets and plans; and establish systems for monitoring progress and responding to lessons learned.

How can this "management skills gap" best be filled? Experience shows that traditional management training is not the solution. Traditional management courses teach general skills for use in the future and participants in such courses find that most of what they learn is not appropriate to their job. Even when appropriate, it is hard to apply when their colleagues have not had a similar learning experience.

In contrast to traditional training, action-training is not general preparation for the future but specific, problem-centered training for the present. It focuses on <u>teams</u> rather than on individuals. It is based on the principle that those who work together should learn together. When teams learn together, they develop a shared set of norms, concepts, skills and vocabulary to use throughout the life of the project.

In action-training, "action" refers to producing practical results of immediate value to the project; "training" refers to building the capacity for the team to continue doing so in the future.3/ Action-training approach is used in different modes such as workshops, seminars and/or consultations, each effort designated to meet the specific needs of a given situation.

TYPICAL ACTION-TRAINING APPLICATIONS

Action-training methods can be used to address a wide range of general or specific project requirements. Examples of applications include:

- project start-up -- getting a newly funded project underway, building the project team and establishing foundations for success;

- annual project planning -- preparing realistic annual operating plans, budgets and schedules;

- project re-planning -- re-orienting the project following project evaluations which recommend changes in objectives or implementations strategy;

- project team expansion -- expanding the operational team, for example, when the technical assistance team arrives and must be integrated with host country personnel; and

- project problem-solving -- solving a variety of strategic, operational, or technical problems.

USING ACTION-TRAINING FOR PROJECT START-UP

One of the most valuable and frequent action-training applications is in launching projects effectively. Because project start-up represents one of the most tested forms of action-training, this manual uses this application to illustrate key principles. By understanding how to use action-training for project start-up, the trainer can easily adapt the principles to other situations.

When used with new projects, action-training helps to:

- shift project ownership from designers to implementors;

3/ See M. Kettering, A Multi-faceted Action-training Approach for Improving Project Management for description of the approach and its application for management improvement in Jamaica.

- establish an appropriate management system for effective implementation; and

- build management skills of the project team and create the internal capacity to be self-reliant.

Shift Ownership to the Implementors

Project understanding and "ownership" can be shifted from designers to those actually responsible for implementation through an action-training process. In most cases, the project designers are not project implementors. For donor sponsored projects, designs are usually prepared by donor staff and outside consultants. For host country projects, designs are prepared by a central ministry or planning authority.

But implementation involves operational level staff who were not involved in the design. Their understanding of what the designers intended is thus limited and the passage of time makes the original implementation plans obsolete. Furthermore, the implementation plans proposed during design are usually sketchy and based on numerous unstated assumptions. There is thus a definite need for realistic implementation planning.

Project implementors must go through their own planning and learning process. They must reach a shared understanding of the project objectives, strategy and implementation approaches. They must negotiate the roles and responsibilities of all participating organizations and individuals, establish methods for updating and revising plans and budgets and develop techniques for monitoring and reporting progress. They must think through these issues as a team to internalize this understanding and make it their project. This transfer of "ownership" is essential for successful implementation.

This ownership and understanding can be effectively transferred during action-training workshops. The ideal time for such workshops is soon after the key implementors have been selected and assigned. For U.S.A.I.D. projects, the best time is shortly before or after the Project Agreements are signed.

Develop the Project Organization

Projects usually involve new organization forms that cross agency boundaries and require the close coordination of individuals who have no prior experience in working together as a team. In new project organizations, lines of authority are unclear and specific operational procedures must be established.

Action-training workshops strengthen the project organization by building teamwork among individuals from different organization units who must cooperate for the project to succeed. Operational procedures and effective working relations are developed during the concentrated effort to build the project's technical and managerial "foundations."

(For further discussion and description of project "foundations," see Planning for Successful Project Implementation: A Guide for Project Teams published by DPMC. 4/)

Build Management Systems

There is no single "best" system for managing all development projects. The best system is one that works and is project specific. The best system is one which fits the project needs and is compatible with the social-cultural-organizational context. While many approaches can be effective, all successful approaches meet the following conditions:

- Consensus and commitment to project objectives and strategies by key organizations and individuals;
- Realistic and agreed upon workplans, action steps and schedules;
- Clearly defined and understood roles and responsibilities for project activities and task;
- Ongoing mechanisms to monitor, coordinate and control task execution;
- Appropriate evaluation and adaptive learning mechanisms to assess progress and respond to changes and lessons learned; and
- Effective use of project-management methods which cut across vertical reporting lines to build an integrated, responsive project team.

These necessary conditions do not occur automatically. In the rush to implement projects, the shaping of these conditions is often ignored. Project teams are frequently selected for their technical competence but have limited managerial experience. If teams neglect to establish these essential management conditions, the result is, predictably, inevitable confusion, delay, low achievement and wasted resources.

4/ This manual is a summary of a more complete discussion of implementation planning found in the original manual: Planning for Project Implementation published by PAMCO, an agency of the Ministry of Finance & Planning, Conference Center Bldg. 4th floor, Corner Duke and Port Royal Streets, Kingston, Jamaica, West Indies.

Action-training helps project teams develop a management system that meets these essential conditions. The action-training process does not attempt to teach a single "system" for managing implementation, which may be inconsistent with other organization systems, processes, or cultures. Rather, it helps the team develop an effective approach which fits the project context and their personal experience.

Enhance Management Skills

Personnel who manage development projects are usually selected for their technical competence not their management skills. But even technical roles include a management component and the technician made-manager faces responsibilities he is not equipped to handle. Managerial skills are essential but often lacking. Traditional management courses are not an ideal solution; key persons cannot be released to attend long training courses and only a portion of what they learn in such courses can be applied in their project context.

With the action-training approach, management skills are learned and applied -- problem-solving, decisionmaking, planning, monitoring and controlling. As concepts are presented to project teams, they are immediately adapted and applied to the project. Because the learning is reinforced by application, the process is effective. Because concepts and tools are tested by application, they must be relevant; and because the project team goes through training together, they learn mutually understood tools for use throughout the life of the project. Through the action-training process the project's implementation foundations are established while the personnel is trained in management concepts of both immediate and future benefit to the individual and the organization. The process encourages project teams to discover their own norms, principles, tools and practices for effective operations and thus builds their competence, their confidence and their capacity to be self-reliant.

CHAPTER TWO: THE DYNAMICS OF ACTION-TRAINING

HOW ACTION-TRAINING WORKSHOPS DIFFER

Action-training workshops differ from traditional management training in several ways. They are participative, practical, "learning-by-doing" programs which simultaneously build team management capacity while producing results of immediate value. They involve minimum formal lectures, maximum participant activity, and extensive use of small groups for discussion, problem-solving and decision making. At the end of each workshop, participants will have produced useful work products and project plans. More important, they will have learned management concepts and discovered effective ways to operate as a team throughout the project.

The unique features of action-training approach can be further explained by describing the role of the facilitator/trainer, the role of participants and the training methods.

Role of the Trainer/Facilitator

The role played by action-training facilitators differs from the role played by "teachers." In a traditional teaching environment, the teacher is the expert; students are presumed to have little knowledge. The job of the teacher is to fill his students with wisdom by lecturing while the students carefully listen and diligently take notes.

Action-trainers, by contrast, recognize that all participants bring to the workshop some valid experience and expertise that relates to project management. The trainer's role is not to be the "expert" but to <u>create an active learning climate in which knowledge is discovered through discussion and mutual exploration</u>.

This approach presumes that much of the relevant information the participants need, to solve the issues at hand, already exists somewhere within the group. The trainer's job is to help the group uncover the needed information and solve their problems. The trainer is first and foremost a facilitator. The challenge is to help shape the process and experience by which teams address the issues and opportunities and then guide the team in recognizing effective methods and procedures that can be used in the future.

The trainer helps the team discover more effective norms. For instance, if the project manager sees that his role is to provide the best ideas and make all the decisions, then capable members of the team (especially junior ones) may be reluctant to contribute their knowledge and ideas. The result is a less effective team. In this situation, the trainer would encourage junior members to participate and introduce the norm that the team works best when everyone contributes. If the trust level with the project manager is high, a trainer may also privately counsel him/her on the value of actively seeking opinion and suggest ways to do so without diminishing his/her authority.

The trainer acts as a catalyst to the group learning, helping them to discover principles they can use to be more effective in solving the issues at hand and in addressing similar future issues. Occasionally the trainer plays an instructor role by suggesting an approach or explaining the use of a particular management tool. He/she may present a brief lecture on, for example, how to set objectives. Such mini-lectures are used at key points in the workshop to give the project team a framework for tackling specific issues and producing useful results. At all times the trainer plays a facilitator role, helping teams to establish climates, relations and processes to achieve their goals.

Role of Participants

In action-training workshops, the primary responsibility for achieving results rests with the participants not with the trainers.

The participants may initially be uncomfortable with this notion, as it contradicts their previous experience with workshops. But the trainer makes it clear by explicit agreements and norms as well as his/her actions that participants are not attending as passive recipients of information. Rather, they are the primary producers of information, decisions and agreements. Once this is understood and participants become actively involved, their discomfort disappears and they produce effective work.

Workshop Approach

Adults learn differently than do children. For effective learning, adults must be able to relate the material to their life experience. The action-training approach is based on principles of effective adult learning (also called "andragogy"). Some important principles of adult learning are as follows:

1. Learning is most effective when the concepts are relevant. Traditional management training courses are limited in that much of what is taught does not apply on the job. Action-training on the other hand concentrates on teaching basic principles and tools highly relevant to the project team's effectiveness. The workshop is designed to accomplish some specific objectives which are agreed to by participants from the beginning. The formal information "taught" is limited to these specific objectives.

2. Learning is most effective when it is applied immediately. Action-training combines the learning of management concepts with their immediate application to the project. Even the best management concepts will be forgotten if not used. Application reinforces learning. Participants remember much more of what is taught because the learning is directly relevant to the task and reinforced through immediate use.

3. Learning is most effective in an active rather than a passive environment. In contrast, traditional learning modes focus on lectures and other passive approaches. Action-training workshops emphasize the use of methods and techniques appropriate to the tasks of participating teams. Small groups discuss issues, solve problems and make decisions which they present both to the larger group and to their organization. Learning occurs best in an environment which is stimulating, challenging, participatory and fun -- the action-training environment.

4. Learning is most effective when the concepts are compatible with individual experience. The planning, organizing and management concepts used in action-training workshops provide a framework to which trainees can fit their individual experience. Rather than being seen as a complex subject which only the project manager must understand, management is understood to be part of every team member's job.

5. Responsibility for learning belongs to the participants, not the trainer. The action-training trainer shifts responsibility for the learning process and for workshop outcomes to the participants. The climate for participant learning responsibiity is established at the beginning and reinforced throughout the workshop.

6. The training process involves both teaching and learning. In action-training workshops, everyone teaches and everyone learns (including the trainer!). The action-training approach builds multi-disciplinary perspectives through problem-solving work groups comprised of individuals from different backgrounds. This helps overcome the myopia caused by individual technical speciality and organization focus.

THE DYNAMICS OF SMALL GROUPS

Two types of dynamics -- task and process -- occur simultaneously during workshops. Task (also called problem-solving) dynamics refers to getting the work done. Discussing ideas, proposing possible solutions and making decisions are examples of task behavior. At the same time, process (also called maintenance) dynamics occur. These deal with how people feel about each other. Ensuring that everyone can speak, testing for group consensus and resolving conflicts are typical process dynamics.

It is important to balance task and process in action-training. A totally task-oriented group may produce results, but there may be little personal fulfillment or commitment. On the other hand, totally process-oriented groups may enjoy the workshop immensely but accomplish little useful work. The action-training trainer must ensure that both task and process dynamics occur. He may sometimes have to adjust the workshop to provide the necessary balance, if the group tends too far in one direction or the other.

Attention to Workshop Product and Process

Action-training trainers are concerned with both product (what is achieved) and with process (how it is produced.)

While workshops must produce specific work products, the trainer does not solve problems for the group. For example, if there is spirited discussion about which agency should be responsible for certain tasks, the trainer resists the temptation to make substantive decisions or recommendations.

Rather, he/she may suggest principles by which the group can decide. He/she might ask the group to explore the implications of the various alternatives and solicit criteria for deciding. When the group has decided, he/she would then "process" the results to make them aware of how they decided and explore how else the team might use that approach in the future. By making decisions on substantive work issues using effective processes, the group develops the confidence and capacity to address simiiar issues in the future. For this reason, the action-training trainer gives primary attention to the process of decisionmaking not to the outcome of the decisions.

The role of a football coach provides a good analogy to the action-training trainer's role. The players, not the coach, must perform on the field. The coach can help each player discover his talents and give tips on how to use them more effectively. He/she can suggest plays for the team, then critique their performance. But it is the players who do the job on the field; the coach sits on the sidelines.

STATES OF GROUP BEHAVIOR

Workshop groups tend to go through four sequential stages of behavior:

- forming - coming together, getting to know each other and the trainer;

- storming - initially resisting the workshop and the trainers, testing the behavior code and determining the rewards and penalties;

- norming - developing a group spirit, feeling good about the workshop, developing trust in the trainers and each other; and

- performing - tackling the work that needs to be done.

Action-training is designed to rapidly move through the first two stages and swiftly get to norming and performing. As a trainer, observe the changes in dynamics which occur over the several days of the workshop. On the first day, people may be tentative and reserved as they test out the workshop and each other. But as bonds of friendship and trust develop, the group takes on its own spirit and character. There will be a point -- sometimes on the first day but usually on the second or third -- when things "click" and you can sense a results-oriented atmosphere.

STYLE OF THE EFFECTIVE TRAINER

Conducting action-training workshops is a demanding, intensive experience. When workshops go well, you will feel stimulated and satisfied. When they do not go well you will feel discouraged and disappointed. The difference between successful and unsuccessful workshops boils down to the climate the trainer sets. You can create an effective climate by being:

- self-confident -- able to guide the workshop without dominating, to be a "catalyst" rather than a "commander";

- enthusiastic -- actively looking forward to the workshop and projecting that enthusiasm to others;

- flexible -- able and willing to adjust the workshop design in response to your observations and participant concerns;

- results-oriented -- knowing what results the group wants to accomplish and aiming toward those results;

- personable and friendly -- interested in people, not aloof or distant, and willing to get to know participants as individuals;

- good-humored and humble -- willing to make jokes about yourself, to be modest, and not elevating yourself above the group;

- multifaceted -- capable of playing simultaneous roles as advisor, catalyst, listener, devil's advocate, teacher, friend;

- open to feedback -- encourage participant comments concerning what is useful and what is not, monitor the climate, willingly accept critique from participants and the co-trainers; and

- sensitive to feelings -- recognize the emotional intensity that some participants may experience, help them acknowledge and deal with their feelings.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAM TRAINING

Conducting action-training workshops often requires a training team. Ideally, there should be one trainer for every six to eight participants (one for each subgroup). One trainer can handle groups less than 10, 2 trainers are recommended for groups of 10 to 17 and 3 trainers for groups of 18 to 24.

It is usually preferable that the trainers be "outsiders" with no direct project involvement. Outside trainers are perceived as neutral and can help resolve disagreements in a way that an interested party could not. On a development project, for example, the training team can be a combination of local or overseas consultants, A.I.D. staff persons unconnected with the project and trainers from another agency. This role should not be played by the A.I.D. project officer or host country project manager.

When an overseas consultant is used, include local persons on the team as well. This helps to ensure cultural understanding, appropriate guidance and relevance. It also reduces dependency and results in capacity building. It is also economical. There will usually be follow-up workshops and it is difficult and expensive to continually use overseas consultants. A good mix for a three person team might be a foreign consultant, a local consultant and a member of the parent agency's training unit. Part of the task of the most experienced trainer is to develop the skills of the other trainers working with him.

Training teams need to be well-prepared to conduct action-training workshops. A good model for helping the training team prepare is the Team Planning Meeting. This methodology, as developed by DPMC, helps the training team candidly discuss their perceptions, expectations and make plans regarding the workshop by covering, for example:

- objectives and outcomes of the workshop;

- skills or weaknesses of each trainer;

- expectations about how the team will operate;

- roles and relationships;

- schedules and responsibilities; and

- norms and methods for feedback.

Trainers need not have extensive technical experience in the subject matter at hand. In fact, the generalist trainer may have an advantage. Trainers who are also experts in the substance of the project (be it health, agriculture, or whatever) may get too involved in the technical details of the project instead of their essential climate-setting role.

CHAPTER THREE: DEVELOPING THE OVERALL TRAINING STRATEGY

ELEMENTS OF A STRATEGY

Because projects are unique, each will have a different improvement strategy based on the project issues and the organizations and individuals involved. Despite project differences, most training strategies will include a combination of:

- workshops -- intensive, customed sessions to develop the basic project management foundations and project strategy;

- seminars -- more standard management training programs to teach key skills and subjects (such as office administration, financial management);

- consultation -- one-on-one or team support around issues not suited to a workshop approach.

A strategy should be initially developed, but a full plan need not and perhaps should not be identified at the start. Decisions about the nature, sequence and participants of future workshops, seminars and consultations are best answered after the first sessions with core staff. Plans should grow and the strategy should evolve, with the fuel being the participation of key personnel and emerging clarification of goods, outcomes, resources and opportunities.

START WITH THE CORE GROUP

The number of people involved with a project may be many, when you count direct project staff, members of participating ministries, consultants, advisory and policy groups, regional and local level personnel, donor and budget agency representatives and so forth. The various "layers" of project personnel can be viewed as an onion, with a small center core surrounded by progressively larger levels of personnel, each more distant from the core and less actively involved.

New projects benefit enormously from an intensive three to five-day implementation planning workshop with key operational staff to establish the management foundations (generally following the five-step model described in the companion manual) and to identify the nature of subsequent activities.

The first workshop should involve primarily the operational personnel, who are most directly involved with implementation, with guidance from the senior level policy personnel. Participants may include the project manager and his immediate staff, key representatives of all participating agencies, consultants and advisor. However, it may accommodate both groups by, for example, confining the first few days to operation group and inviting senior staff to initial sessions and to the last half-day for presentations and discussion.

The intensive planning workshop for core staff may be followed by other sessions over time for other "layers" of the project organization. After the first workshop, the team will be in a good position to identify follow-up activities, generally involving further workshops, training seminars and consultations, with the topics and participants changing over time.

For example, it may be desirable to have three to five workshops spread over a few months to include all levels of project personnel, with intermittent consultation around such issues as:

- Developing detailed financial plans and future cash-flow projections and preparing the budget request;

- Conducting a task analysis of project staff positions to identify training and development needs for project personnel;

- Developing a data collection plan to collect and analyze data evaluation issues identified by the project team; and

- Identifying and implementing appropriate uses of microcomputers for project management and administrative uses.

WORKING WITH THE PROJECT MANAGER

Work closely with the project manager to conduct a "situation audit" of the project and identify issues he/she is concerned with. Together, make a list of objectives the workshops should accomplish, stating them in simple terms with a minimum of management jargon. An example list:

1. Acquaint all staff with the project and gain agreement on objectives and strategy;

2. Define and agree to specific roles and responsibilities for each participating agency;

3. Clarify the project organization structure, including lines of supervision, authority and responsibility;

4. Identify and create any special operational procedures needed for the administrative aspects of the project;

5. Better integrate the project's administrative requirements with Ministry regulations; and

6. Strengthen working relationships among project members and develop high performance standards for team members.

These, in addition to specific technical issues, become the basis for the workshop itself.

You, the trainer, need not become an expert about the project. But during the course of your discussions, you will acquire information that helps you be more sensitive to important issues. Try to develop an understanding of:

- project background, history, and objectives;

- working relationships among implementing agencies;

- relationships of central agencies to their regional and local levels;

- importance of the project to the broader program and to the implementing agency;

- recent history of project events and the roles played by various individuals and agencies;

- major needed supporters of the project and their status, influence, and authority; and

- present or potential problems.

Other information can be obtained by reading project documentation and by discussing the project with other knowledgeable people.

CHAPTER FOUR: PREPARING FOR THE ACTION-TRAINING WORKSHOP

One of the first steps in most training assistance strategies is a workshop. Several of the steps described in this chapter will have been started during your discussions with the project manager. This chapter describes the following key points in workshop preparation:

- Group size and participant selection;

- Workshop length, facilities, and location; and

- Developing the workshop design.

GROUP SIZE AND PARTICIPANT SELECTION

The best size for action-training workshops is between 12 and 24 persons. While workshops can be held with as few as 6 or 7 and as many as 28 or 30 persons, groups of this size are less effective. Unless very few people are involved in the project, small groups do not adequately represent all the necessary technical and organizational perspectives. With larger groups, workshop logistics become more complex, organization more difficult and less gets accomplished. Thus, if the potential number of attendees is large, you and the project manager should carefully review the list to see which persons are less vital or can be included in later workshops.

Participant Selection

Criteria for selecting participants includes both the practical -- what key operational personnel should be here? -- and the political -- who must be invited because their cooperation is needed?

Invite individuals of roughly the same organization rank or level. While you can invite both an individual and his boss (or subordinates), it is often not a good idea to have too broad a mix of senior, mid-level, and junior people in the same working sessions. Naturally, this is structurally determined; but senior people may be insulted or lower level people may not express their opinions. One idea that has worked well is to invite senior people to open the workshop and include a half-day "executive" session at the end in which they are briefed on the workshop results and presented issues for review or decision.

WORKSHOP LENGTH, LOCATION, AND FACILITIES

Length

The optimum length for the initial action-training workshop is between three and five days. Shorter workshops are less productive as participants need time to become comfortable with each other and the tasks. Longer workshops are seldom possible because people cannot be away from the job that long. While it might take 12 workshop days to fully activate the project, the time is better used in several shorter sessions between which participants follow-up and gather information for the next session.

Location

You cannot always select the workshop location, you may be confined to the organization's facilities. But when there is a choice, select an interruption-free location away from the office so participants cannot slip away to attend to other business. If several organizations are involved, it may be appropriate to rotate locations and hold later workshops on each organization's home turf.

If the budget permits, select a retreat, lodge or hotel in a location that represents a welcome change of pace for participants. But be aware of the drawbacks. Trainers who have held workshops at seaside resorts or locations with evening entertainment have found participants daydreaming about the sandy beach or dragging themselves to class in the morning, exhausted from the festivities of the evening before. To reduce this problem, schedule some free time as a reward for hard work.

Workshop Facilities and Training Room Layout

The training room layout affects learning. Before the workshop begins, arrange the layout to stimulate discussion. Avoid the traditional classroom style of neat rows of tables all facing the same direction; this arrangement limits discussion. Arrange tables so participants can easily see each other by turning their heads.

The workshop room should have the following features:

- good lighting and ventilation;

- walls to which charts can be taped;

- curtains or shades to darken the room when needed;

- adequate table space to spread out charts and papers;

- movable tables large enough for 5 to 8 individuals and their working materials;

- room for side tables for materials and registration; and

- space to set-up coffee and snacks.

One practical layout is a large "U" shaped table with charts around the outside. Another layout is a semicircle of work tables for small groups. These formats permit better interaction for presentors and let participants see each other. Set up tables for subgroup work around the edges. Having a semicircle of tables for presentation sessions and small tables for work groups makes it easy to move between small group and plenary group activities.

If there is not enough room for both a U and subgroup table, you can either move the tables back and forth for the large and small group sessions, or arrange small tables in a fan-like pattern. (See Figure 1). Avoid crowding and make sure each participant has adequate space for papers and notebook. Put a separate table at the side of the room for workshop materials and handouts.

You, the trainer, should not sit behind a large table; tables create both a physical and psychological communication barrier. Most of the time you should be standing and walking around the room rather than sitting behind a large table. Have a small table for your working papers and overhead projector, but avoid large tables that inhibit your movement.

DEVELOPING THE WORKSHOP DESIGN

Guidelines for Workshop Design

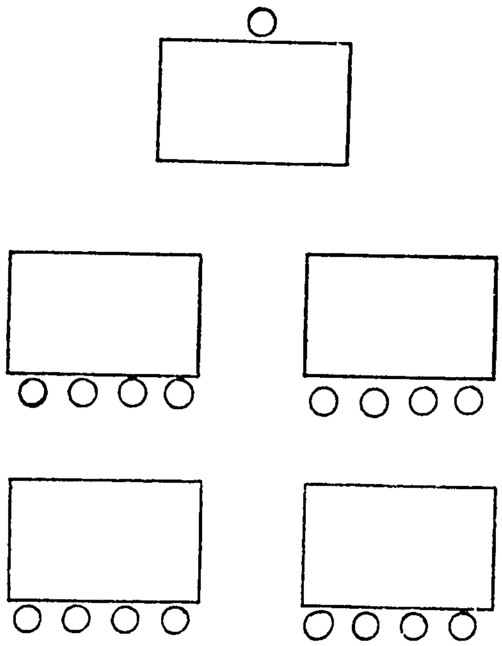
Good workshops flow smoothly in both <u>content</u> and <u>process</u>. Achieving smooth content flow means considering the logical sequence of activities needed for participants to develop common understanding, formulate agreements and prepare plans. To do this, certain modules must logically proceed others.

For example, the group cannot decide on roles and responsibilities until they first agree on project strategies and objectives, develop a detail list of tasks and activities, and understand the LRC (Linear Responsibility Chart) tool. To cite another example, the group must first clarify the project organization structure and information needs before designing a reporting system.

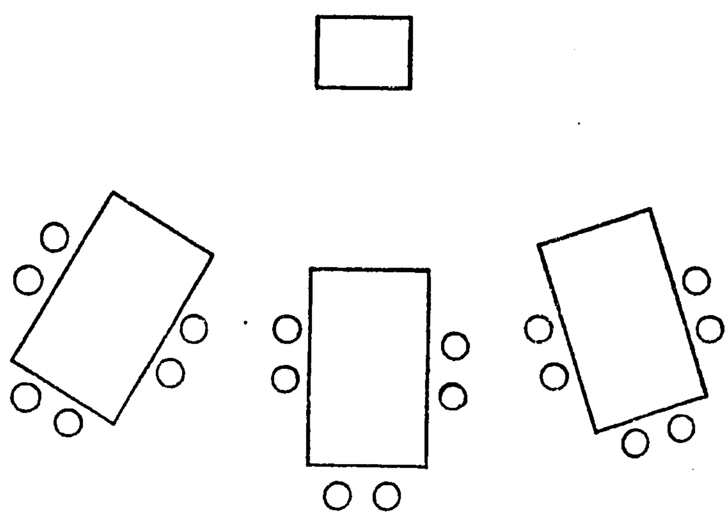
Figure 1

TRAINING ROOM LAYOUT

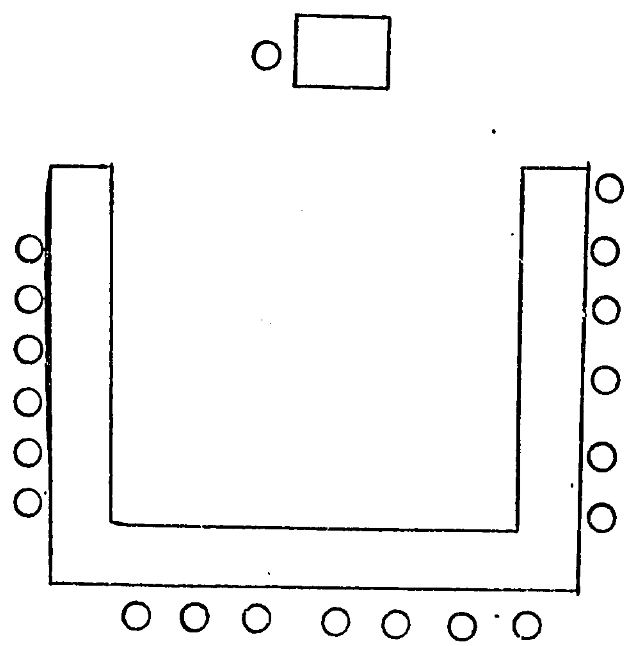
DON'T DO THIS



DO THIS



AND/OR THIS



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Achieving a logical process flow means considering how to actively involve participants in the workshop. This means deciding what can be done together in the large group and what can be done in small groups, selecting who should be in what work groups, deciding when work group composition should be changed and so forth.

Remember these three basic guidelines while developing the workshop design:

1. Kiss - Keep It Simple, Sir - The workshop design should not be too complex or ambitious. Rather, concentrate on a few related objectives that can be realistically achieved given the time available and the background of participants.

2. Keep It Flexible - The artful workshop designer uses the principal of "structured flexibility" and develops the agenda knowing that certain activities might need more time and that some might be shortened. An overly rigid design causes problems; certain activities will need more time than initially anticipated and new opportunities may spring from the workshop. Have a tentative plan but keep it flexible and build "time cushions" into the agenda.

3. Keep It Active - Make maximum use of small group workshop, discussion, presentation and decisionmaking on the part of participants, rather than trainer lecture. At least 50 percent of the workshop time should involve active participation. As a rule of thumb, no single person should "lecture" for no more than 10 minutes at a time; longer presentations should involve active participation and discussion.

Clarifying Workshop Objectives

In your discussions with the project manager, you identified general objectives to be achieved during the action-training support. Now describe the objectives for the first workshop in specific, measurable terms. A typical list of objectives for the initial planning workshop:

- All participants clearly agree on and can clearly describe the major objectives of the project;

- The group has identified a basic strategy for implementing the project;

- The role and responsibilities of each participating agency are clearly defined and agreed to;

- The group develops some specific documents needed for project implementation (such as an implementation schedule or list of equipment needs);

- The group has decided on the timing, content and participants for future workshops, and

- The group develops a short-term action plan, which identifies who does what and when.

Preparing the Detailed Design and Agenda

Use a process of mental visualization to develop the detailed workshop design. Imagine the workshop in action and mentally picture the activities taking place. Think through how the information shared by participants will logically grow. By doing this, you can decide on the activity sequence, timing, the pattern of small groups and large groups and so forth. From this mental visualization, prepare an agenda.

For simple workshops, the descriptive agenda in Figure 2 may provide enough detail. For more complex workshops, the annotated agenda Figure 3 is an excellent tool for helping the training team mentally visualize the details of each activity.

FIGURE 2

KHON KAEN UNIVERSITY RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT PROJECT PRE-IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHOP

May 13-14, 1983
Rosesukon Hotel, Khon Kaen

PARTICIPANTS PROFILE

Workshop participants will be some 28 people concerned with the project from DTEC (5), RDI (6), U.S.A.I.D. (6), the KK Rectors Office (2), KK Faculty (8) and Ford Foundation (1).

KK and RDI participants are those responsible for implementing the project. Some have been involved in the project design but not all are familiar with it. Most hold a masters or doctorate in social science or agriculture and are in their 30's and 40's.

DTEC participants are primarily financial and administrative support personnel. U.S.A.I.D. participants include the project officers, program staff and a financial officer.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

1. Broaden project understanding among the major parties involved in the project;
2. Develop a strategy for addressing project conditions precedent and covenants;
3. Develop specific operational procedures for contracting, training, financial reporting, project monitoring and procurement;
4. Develop specific research management procedures;
5. Develop and/or review job descriptions for six new RDI support staff and plan for their hiring;
6. Discuss/clarify roles of the various parties in the project.

WORKSHOP FORMAT

One and a half day "action-training" workshop with extensive work in small subgroups to develop specific products or working procedures. Brief presentation of key management concepts followed by application in small groups. At end of workshop, short-term action plans are developed (with steps, timing and responsibilities identified) for continued effort.

FRIDAY, MAY 13

8:00 - 8:45	ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION: Arriving participants sign in and are given a name tag.
8:45 - 9:15	INTRODUCTIONS: Participants "interview" person sitting next to him/her and get background, education, interests. Participants then introduce each other before the full group.
9:15 - 9:30	WORKSHOP APPROACH: Participants define their expectations for the workshop. Trainer lists these on the wall, along with a list of specific outcomes expected. Brief discussion of workshop agenda and approach.
9:30 - 10:00	PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES: Presentation by Dr. Akin or J. Foti on project objectives and arrangements. Presentation supported by flip charts or view-graphs.
10:00 - 10:15	COFFEE BREAK
10:15 - 11:00	ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS: Brief presentation and group discussion on the characteristics of successful projects. Handout: five-step chart.
11:00 - 12:00	SMALL GROUPS DISCUSS/DEVELOP PROCEDURES: Participants divide into three or four subgroups of six to seven persons each, based on their interests and role in the project. Probable subgroups and objectives of each are: <u>Contracting for Research</u> -- developing a flow-chart of steps to be used in reviewing and approving research proposals and ensuring approved research is reflected in annual workplans.

<u>Procurement</u> -- discussion and understanding of U.S.A.I.D. requirements for small value and local procurement. Additional discussion of applicable KKU and RTG procurement procedures.

<u>Training</u> -- develop agreed procedures for KKU to identify, select, and process training participants.

<u>Financial Reporting</u> -- discussion of U.S.A.I.D., DTEC and KKU financial planning and reporting procedures.

12:00 - 1:30	LUNCH
1:30 - 2:00	SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS (continued)
2:00 - 3:00	SUB GROUP PRESENTATIONS: Each group presents to the large group the results of their work. Questions, answers and discussion.
3:00 - 3:15	COFFEE BREAK
3:15 - 3:45	TRAINER PRESENTATION - LINEAR RESPONSBILITY CHART (LRC): Trainer briefly describes and illustrates use of this tool for clarifying authorities, relationships, and responsibilities. Tool will be used on Day Two.
3:45 - 4:30	DAY ONE WRAP UP: Trainer leads discussion in summarizing the key decisions and agreements made during the day. Topics and composition of subgroups for Day two decided.

SATURDAY, MAY 14

8:30 - 8:45	INTRODUCTION AND ISSUES: Brief discussion of ideas, questions based on Day one.
8:45 - 9:30	SMALL GROUPS DEVELOP IMPLEMENTATION PLANS: In subgroups, participants identify key activities for the 6-12 months. Groups use a simple bar-chart format, listing action steps, timing and responsibilities of key actors.

Possible subgroups to include conditions precedent, and organization arrangements. Other subgroup topics to be decided.

FIGURE 2 (continued)

9:45 - 10:00	COFFEE BREAK
10:00 - 11:00	SUBGROUP PRESENTATION TO THE BIG GROUP: Action plans and responsibilities identified by small groups presented to large groups for discussion.
11:00 - 11:30	WRAPUP: Review originial objectives, evaluate workshop progress. Review agreements and decisions. Discuss unresolved issues, agree on next action steps and responsibilities.

You need not, cannot and should not plan down to the smallest details during the design phase. Every workshop has internal decision points, and certain choices are best deferred until they must be made. For example, you need not decide small work group composition until the time the work groups form. You may pose criteria in advance (e.g., group by similar job functions), but your decisions of who to put in what groups is best made after observing the participants in action.

Review the draft agenda with other trainers and the project manager. Be willing to revise where needed. After the first draft, for example, you might observe that not all the workshop objectives have been covered. You might note that too little time has been given to certain activities or that break times were forgotten. You might notice that there is too little group discussion or that inadequate time is given for "processing" the results. By reviewing and revising the agenda several times, such problems become apparent and can be solved.

Preparing Materials

After the workshop design is completed, prepare needed materials such as:

- Visual aids for presentation (flip charts, overhead transparencies, etc.);

- participant working materials and handouts;

- blank forms; and

- cases or examples.

Also identify existing project documents, budgets and schedules which will be needed and make sure they are available.

CHAPTER FIVE: GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING WORKSHOP

This chapter presents some general guidelines for conducting effective action-training workshops. The topics described here include:

- Creating and maintaining an active learning climate;
- Explaining and processing small work group tasks;
- Leading discussions and processing the learning; and
- Working smoothly as a member of training team.

The topics of this chapter are general and apply to all types of action-training. Specific exercises for helping the project team achieve particular results are found in Chapter Six.

CREATING AND MAINTAINING AN ACTIVE LEARNING CLIMATE

Successful action-training programs depend on establishing an active and participatory learning climate. Understanding and influencing the workshop climate is one of the trainer's most important tasks. To build an active climate, the effective trainer:

- Works from a prepared strategy and agenda but remains flexible to capture new opportunities;
- Monitors progress, revises schedules to achieve major learning objectives;
- Identifies key participants and develops personal relationships with all;
- Monitors degree and nature of participation, checks body language and non-verbal communication as well as verbal communication;
- Begins each day with climate-setting activity; presents objectives and agenda daily;

- Summarizes frequently, processes and helps participants discover their learning;

- Posts key charts to wall and makes frequent reference to them;

- Encourages and helps the team to assess participation; and

- Closes each day with review, evaluation and process checks.

Works From Prepared Agenda But Remains Flexible

Your agenda is only a guideline, not a blueprint. During the workshop, watch and listen carefully and use what you discover to shift the emphasis, expand or contract certain activities, rearrange the order and so forth. Make tactical adjustments and mid-course corrections to keep on track, like a rocket aimed for the moon. Remain flexible and open to new opportunities.

The superior trainer maintains "real-time" awareness of workshop dynamics and uses this information to make adjustments on a continuing basis. He lets the agenda guide but not constrain him. He is sensitive to various types of feedback, participant body language, facial expressions, degree of participation and so forth. If the discussion is particularly active, he may let it continue beyond the scheduled time. If he notices participants are tiring, he may call for a break even though the scheduled break is not due. He works from prepared strategy and structured agenda but revises to capture new opportunities and meet time constraints.

Monitors Progress and Adjusts

Constantly monitor the clock, the agenda and the planned objectives to measure progress and decide what changes are needed. Effective trainers plan and monitor on a daily basis, on activity basis and on total workshop basis.

On a daily basis, the training team plans the day's activities and allocates time to each. Tentative decisions are made as to subgroup topics, what should be covered before lunch, etc.

Monitor each workshop activity as well. During each activity, monitor progress and try to complete the activity during the time allocated. If the activity is particularly rich and valuable, let it continue longer. But increased time given to any activity must be taken from later activities. There is never enough time to cover all the discussion points that participants will raise, so the trainer must be willing and able to gently cut off discussion.

After each activity, review the agenda and decide how to proceed next. For example, if there is only a half-hour till the lunch break and the next activity scheduled will take an hour, the training team must make a decision: delay lunch, shorten the activity, or substitute something else.

In addition to monitoring and adjusting on a daily and hourly basis, the training team needs to monitor the entire workshop to make sure that key objectives will be accomplished before the workshop is over. To do this, "schedule in reverse." This means mentally scheduling backwards from the end of the workshop and allocating time to the key activities, then seeing what activities need to be shortened or dropped, or done in parallel in small groups.

Because the estimated time needed to complete an activity is only a rough estimate, there may be time gaps of 15 minutes to a half hour before lunch or the end of the day, not long enough to start a new activity. Fill these by lengthening the discussion on a particular activity or by returning to a topic that was covered earlier but warrants more discussion. In addition, the trainer should have "fillers," such as simple games, exercises, or learning experiences to use during these time gaps.

Identifies Key Participants and Develops Personal Relationships With All

Get to know the participants. Begin by studying the information on the roster. Observe participants comments during the workshop and talk to them during beaks and meal times.

Make a special effort to know (and influence) "key" persons, those with seniority or important project positions. Build trust with these individuals, encourage them to be open on issues concerning them. Make sure that these key participants have a good workshop experience by calling on them to present their work group results, give the morning review of the day before, or otherwise be actively involved.

Monitors Degree and Nature of Participation, Checks Body Language

The effective trainer closely watches and influences the degree and nature of participation. Discussions should be balanced; do not let just a few people dominate the discussion. You can influence participation by directing questions to those who have been silent. (See "Use of Questions" later in this chapter.) You can also give quiet persons more prominent roles such as presenting the results of their small work group.

Watch body language. If participants appear tired, sleepy, or bored, figure out why. Signs of tiredness may mean it is time for a break or that there are other more pressing issues. The "mini-break" is effective if an activity is taking a long time but should not be interrupted by a long break. Simply ask everyone to stand up and noisily yawn (demonstrate this with them) or to jog around the room a couple of times (lead the jogging line). This produces humor and relaxation and gets their attention back.

Begins Each Day with Climate Setting

Spend a few minutes each morning with some transition activities to put participants into the proper frame of mind for active learning. Early in the morning participants may be thinking of other things, take a few minutes to get their attention.

There are several climate-setting activities you can use. You can begin with an enthusiastic welcome, informal discussion about what participants did the night before, telling a funny story, a simple exercise or game. When using exercises, begin by explaining the problem, then give participants time to solve it. Walk around the room to monitor their progress; and after everyone has had a chance to work on the problem, find someone who has solved it and ask him to come to the front of the room and explain his solution. Give applause and award a token prize. Keep such exercises brief -- not more than ten minutes.

Following this, ask a participant to summarize the previous day (alert him ahead of time so he can prepare). This serves several objectives -- it reinforces the previous day's activities, it generates involvement, it shows the trainers interest in feedback. Listen carefully to criticisms and suggestions for improvement.

After participant feedback, make a transition comment and present the agenda for the day. Write these down on a flip chart before hand and post them on the wall for reference during the day.

Summarizes Frequently and Helps Participants Discover Their Learning

Action-training workshops frequently involve a great amount of detail on various topics. Your job as a trainer is to summarize the details, relate them to the broader picture of the project and help participants become aware of what they are learning and deciding.

To do this, summarize frequently. Link forward by showing how the current discussion relates to a topic that will be covered later. Link backward by explaining hc a topic relates to a concept that was covered earlier.

Builds Active Group Spirit

Each group develops its own unique spirit and personality, which contributes much to the effectiveness of learning and the enjoyment of the workshop.

You, the trainer, can help develop this spirit by making jokes about yourself and friendly references to workshop personalities. The use of games, role-plays, token prizes and similar activities also contributes to group spirit. When small groups will have the same members throughout, you can encourage the small groups to name their groups and refer to them by name (e.g., the Tigers) rather than by number.

Pay close attention to identifying the "natural leaders" attending the workshop. Natural leaders are those who earn the respect of the other participants by their contributions to the workshop. Draw on the natural leaders to head the small work groups and use them as informal sources of feedback.

Close Each Day With Progress Review and Process Checks

End each day by reviewing the day's activities and the objectives (posted on the wall). Ask the group how they felt about the day, what parts were effective, what parts were not and why. Try to draw out some "lessons learned" from the day and help the group identify decisions and agreements reached. Help the group take control of and continue this type of evaluation for themselves. Close each day with warm words and commend them on their progress.

EXPLAINING AND PROCESSING SMALL WORK GROUP TASKS

Action-training workshops alternate between large group discussion, problem-solving in small groups, and presentation of small group results to the large group. This basic cycle continues throughout the workshop.

Small groups are the heart of the workshop. In small groups, participants can efficiently address real issues and prepare work products -- budgets, schedules, technical plans and so forth.

The trainer's role with small groups consists of two parts -- explaining the task and processing their work. Here is what the trainer does when explaining the task to small groups:

- gives clear task instructions to groups;

- circulates to monitor progress and pace groups to reach closure; and

- prepare groups to present their results.

Divides Large Group Into Small Groups

During the workshop, there should be several small group problem-solving and discussion activities. During the early part of the workshop, groups may tackle the same task to develop a common base of understanding. During later parts, they will frequently address different issues to make better use of time.

You will usually change the small group composition several times during the workshop. Participants enjoy working with different people and new groups add a fresh perspective. But while there are benefits to changing groups, there are also costs. Each new group needs time to get to know each other, feel comfortable, develop their own procedures, identify the leadership structure and produce effective work. Thus a newly formed group will initially not be as productive as one that has worked together.

You can select group members in one of four ways:

1. Use Random Distribution - Have participants count off "1-2-3, 1-2-3". Random selection is appropriate when no particular background is necessary for the task. Random choice is a good way to select the first small groups. It is completely arbitrary and reduces participant anxiety about how the groups were chosen. Random selection is normally used only for the first small group, after that use a more structured selection.

2. Use Structured Distribution for Group Diversity - This approach uniformly distributes participants so that each group has persons from different provinces, departments and job responsibilities. Structured distribution for diversitiy is usually the best method but it requires that trainers gather participant data to make the selection. Make sure that each group is balanced in terms of having active members.

3. Use Structured Selection for Group Specialization - It is often important to group people according to how their position, background and experience relates to the specific group tasks. For example, people may group by similar job function (all extension agents) or by organizational level (all unit heads or in the same department). This grouping is best when the small groups address specialized technical aspects of the project.

You may want to have people self-select their groups if you do not know the participants well enough to assign them. Announce the tasks, put a paper on the wall and have each person sign up for the group of his choice (or consult the project manager for his recommendations).

4. Use Key Persons - Sometimes you will need all "key" such persons together in one group such as when preparing a master project schedule. When key persons must be together, assign the remaining persons tasks that do not require the presence of key people.

Group Size Considerations

The best size for small groups is between five and eight people: more than eight is too many for everyone to participate; less than five and there are not enough different viewpoints.

The ideal number of simultaneous small groups is three. Three is large enough that different solutions will emerge when each group has the same task and is small enough that there is time to present all the solutions and integrate the results. When they tackle different tasks, three presentations can be efficiently processed.

Gives Task Instructions To Groups

The tasks to be done in small groups derive from the overall workshop objectives. After the local group reaches a common understanding of project objectives and strategy and defines major components of the project, small groups can be assigned the task of developing the detailed activity lists, schedules and so forth.

Assign the small groups their tasks while participants are still together in the large group. Make sure that each person knows the task, his group, and where that group will meet. Tell how much time the groups will have. Summarize each task on flip chart paper and post it where the small group will meet, so they can refer to it.

Decide where each small group will meet and be ready to move the furniture around (if necessary). Make sure that each group has the materials it needs -- flipchart, marking pens, case study and so forth.

Circulates To Monitor Progress

When the participants begin their small group work, the trainers should circulate to clarify the task, help them get started, observe progress and otherwise assist.

While the group works, monitor their progress against time. Periodically announce the time remaining to the group ("you have 15 more minutes to finish"). Be somewhat flexible with time, if you see that all the groups need more time. But pace them to move on and attempt to finish their task as best they can.

Prepare Groups to Present Their Work

Explain to each group the presentation approach and time limits. Encourage each to write down their work on flipcharts or a white board and choose their presenters.

There will always be groups who finish early and those that need more time. Encourage those which finish early to review their work and see where it might be improved. Encourage the slow groups to summarize and complete their work.

It is a good idea to take a break before the small groups present present. During the breaks, the slower groups can catch up and someone from each group can neatly write their work on flipcharts for presentation after the break.

Processing the Small Groups Work

The most important part of action-training workshops is when small groups present their work to the large group for review, critique and discussion. Here are some key activities for the trainer:

- Helps move charts and visuals to center stage;

- Calls participants together and selects order of presentation;

- Explains context and suggests what audience should look and listen for;

- Enforces time limits to give all groups equal time;

- Moderates class discussion, makes learning points;

- Commends and congratulates all, gives token prizes, and;

- Makes sure key products are saved, posted to wall and/or written up.

Moves Charts and Visuals

Take care of the logistical items before the presentations begin. Move all the flip chart stands to locations such as the center where they can be easily seen. Have the charts from each group ready to put up as soon as the previous group is finished.

Calls Participants Together

When the logistics are ready, call the participants together. It is best not to sit participants behind the U-shaped table. Rather, move the tables out of the way so the chairs can be moved close enough to flipcharts to be easily read.

Before hand, the trainer should review the work of all the groups and decide on the order of presentations. If the groups have identical tasks, the weakest group should present first and the strongest group last. (This avoids the embarrassment that a group with incomplete results feels when they follow a group which did an excellent job.) If the groups have different tasks, present first the topics that will be least controversial or involve less discussion.

Explains Context

If appropriate to the task, select an individual to play the role of the "Minister" or other senior official who the presentation is for. Participants enjoy this and selecting a quiet but capable individual is a way to overcome his shyness. If you select someone as Minister, add some "fanfare" to it by giving him a special chair and a cup of tea. Get this person's agreement before hand and describe what he should look for in the presentations.

Introduce each group by explaining what their task was. If appropriate, also explain what the audience should look for. For example (in a Log Frame presentation), you might instruct the audience to look for proper hierarchy of objectives, complete indicators, and realistic assumptions.

Enforces Time Limits

Try to set time limits so that all groups have roughly equal time. State, for example, that each group will have ten minutes to present followed by ten minutes of discussion. Use a kitchen timer with a bell, or select an individual to watch the time and announce when the ten minutes are up.

Try to enforce time limits. If you do not, most of the time will be spent on the first group or two. If the topics are identical, the most interesting issues will have been discussed before the last group presents. In any event, you are likely to get behind if you don't set time limits. When each group has run out of time, initiate applause and proceed to the next.

If the group tasks are different, discuss each after the presentations. If the tasks are identical, have some discussion after each but reserve time for discussion after all the groups present.

Moderates Class Discussion

During the presentations, make notes on the approach taken by each group. After all the presentations, initiate a discussion which compares and contrasts the various group products (assuming the same tasks). If possible, post the work of all the groups so it is visible at the same time.

Let the audience first make their own comments. Save your own analysis for last. Try to point out one or two strong points of each group. Mention effective use of the concepts ("Here is an example of a complete indicator which includes quality, quantity, and time measures.")

Ask each group what they discovered from the experience. In additon to discoveries concerning the substance of the project, ask for their observations about the process of working together in the group.

Commends and Congratulates Their Work

Commend the good work done by all the groups. You can add to the workshop spirit by giving the groups a token prize such as candy. Give prizes to all the groups -- every group is a winner, no one loses. You can add to the spirit by having the "Minister" award the prizes. But do not exclude any group from recognition, even if their work was weak.

Makes Sure Products Are Saved

Do not let the group's written products become lost — gather them up. Some you will post to the wall so participants can review them later in the workshop. Others should be rapidly typed, duplicated, and returned to participants. This is especially true for schedules or plans that participants will build on and use later during the workshop. Many of these will also become part of the formal workshop report.

LEADING DISCUSSIONS AND PROCESSING THE LEARNING

The most important role of the action-trainer is to help participants discover what they have accomplished and how. This is called "processing" -- turning the "raw" data of discussion into the "cooked" data of agreements and understanding.

Processing occurs at many points during the workshop. For example, you process at the end of small group presentations, at the end of each day and whenever else it is useful.

Effective processing demands paying close attention to what is happening, then artfully posing questions to participants and leading the discussion.

Begin with a general sense of where you want the discussion to go — to resolve a problem, develop understanding of a concept, make a decision and so forth. State the general purpose of the discussion. For instance, "we have heard three different presentations on the project strategy. Let us see if we can combine these into one by identifying the common themes."

Lead the discussion and encourage participation by all through the use of directed questions and an open atmosphere. Draw out shy members, control over-talkative participants and do not allow one or two members to dominate. Keep the discussion moving. The discussion flow should be among the group members rather than between you and group members. Use a flipchart or blackboard to record discussion highlights and key points.

To process more effectively, the trainer often introduces an analytic framework. Without an efficient means of structuring the discussion, discussions become fragmented and the results are lost. The analytic framework can be as simple as a heading on the flipchart (such as issues, problems, etc.), under which discussion results are summarized.

Simple matrices often provide useful analytic frameworks. For example, if there is a discussion of potential problems, the trainer might draw on the blackboard a matrix with columns entitled potential problems, ways of recognizing problems, preventive actions, and corrective actions, then use the matrix to structure the discussion.

When the key points have been resolved (or there is no more time), bring the issue to a close by reviewing highlights of the discussion. Review any conclusions which have been reached and make clear what has been accomplished by the discussion. Restate any minority view points and get agreement for any action proposed.

The Use of Questions

Questions are a key tool for leading discussions. They can be used to:

- involve all members of the group;
- draw out quiet, shy, or hesitant members;
- keep people awake and thinking;
- stop private conversation or prevent domination by one member;
- draw out members' experience; and
- check on the group's understanding of the subject matter.

There are two basic types of questions. The general question is addressed to the group as a whole; the direct question is addressed to an individual by name.

The general question stimulates thinking by all members of the group. By putting the question to the group as a whole, every member of the group has to think, whereas by naming the person who is to answer before asking the question, all the other members can mentally loaf. It is best to lead off a topic with general questions and to use more general questions in earlier workshop activities than in later ones. Using direct questions too early may embarrass participants by asking them questions they are not yet ready to answer.

The direct question, addressed to an individual by name, must be used carefully to avoid embarrassment when the person cannot answer. Use direct questions to draw upon the experience of those most knowledgeable. Direct questions can also be used to bring shy members into the discussion, but the question should be one which he is able to answer. Use direct questions to break up private conversations or to interrupt a discussion monopolizer by asking someone else to comment.

A useful technique is to phrase the question as a general question first, pause to allow participants to think, then name the individual who should answer; (What do you think the Minister should do - (pause) - Mr. Agus"?)

The pick-up question (another form of the direct question) is used to refer back to a contribution which was passed over in the heat of the discussion. This sometimes happens when a participant who speaks quietly is interrupted by a more vocal participant. Make a mental note at the time and come back to the point later, if only to give recognition to the contributor. Here is an example: "I believe you said a few minutes ago, Mr. Farkle, that you once encountered this same situation. Would you like to tell us a little more about it?"

While every question is either a general or a direct question, questions can be further divided into a number of categories.

An open question is expressed in broad terms and is open to a wide variety of answers. It usually begins with who, what, when, where, how, or why. ("Who should be responsible for acting in this type of situation?", "Why is it important that the agency should have a shared definition of strategy?", "What are the advantages of regular team meetings?").

When participants ask you questions, it is often effective to redirect the question back to the group. The redirected question keeps the group active and prevents a dialogue between the discussion leader and only one participant. ("That is an excellent question. Who would like to answer it?").

Use open and redirected questions frequently, but avoid closed questions because they do not provide active thinking or stimulate further discussion.

Here are some general tips for using questions:

- Questions should be brief, clear and simply worded;
- Distribute direct questions randomly. Do not use fixed order such as clockwise around the room;
- Distribute questions evenly among the members of the group;
- Questions should cover one point only and be single rather than multiple or compound questions;
- Questions should relate to the ability and experience of the person to whom they are addressed; and
- After asking a question, give the members of the group time to think before expecting an answer.

WORKING SMOOTHLY AS A TRAINING TEAM MEMBER

Action-training requires a team approach. Because these workshops are intensive and demanding, the trainers must work together and coordinate their efforts to achieve the workshop objectives. Here are some things the effective team does:

- Meets each morning to review agenda, objectives and responsibilities;
- Anticipates next activity; prepares to move tables, etc. and maintain flow;
- Uses team-teaching approach and supports each other;
- Critiques colleagues' performance and gently accepts critique from others;
- Collects, posts, types and distributes key participant products; and
- Reviews at end of each day, analyzes results, clarifies approach for next day.

Anticipates Next Activity and Maintai s Workshop Flow

One measure of an effective training team is that there is little time wasted moving tables, handing out materials, bringing white-boards to the front and so forth. When valuable time is taken up by such logistical activities, the trainers appear disorganized.

The trainers not "on" should be aware of what is to happen next and be ready to act. This awareness comes from the plan discussed during the morning meeting and from paying close attention to what is happening.

Uses Team-Teaching Approach and Supports Each Other

As experienced action-training trainers know, conducting workshops is difficult and mentally exhausting. The difficulty can be reduced by using a team-teaching mode. Team-teaching also provides greater variety for the participants, since it is easier to get bored with only one trainer.

Two persons are especially valuable for processing the discussion which follows small group presentations. During these discussions, trainers must concentrate on many different things at once. A single trainer may miss an important point or a probing question or not notice a shy participant who has been trying to enter the discussion. The second trainer views the discussion from a different perspective and is in a good position to intervene. The second trainer can also write things on the board while the other leads the discussion.

Critiques Colleagues Performance and Gently Accepts Critique

The effective trainer is always interested in knowing how he/she can improve. Even the highly experienced trainer can improve and should be willing to listen to constructive criticism from his/her co-trainers.

During each activity, one or more co-trainers should observe and evaluate the activity. He/she should give feedback to the trainer on how well the session objectives were achieved and highlight comments or opportunities the trainer may have missed.

Collects, Posts, Types and Distributes Key Participant Products

Working products developed by participants (such as schedules, responsibility charts) should be collected to be posted, typed, distributed and perhaps included in the workshop report.

Interim products should be posted on the walls, so participants can review and refer to them. If the administrative support capabilities permit, key products should be typed and returned to pariticipants. It is essential to collect, reproduce, and distribute the live work products (such as the Objectives Trees, Logical Frameworks, Agreement Charts and Schedules).

Products developed in a workshop will normally be written on flipchart paper or whiteboards. To simplify reproduction and distribution, ask one member of each group to write their work down on paper, using clear writing and black ink. Such products can easily be photocopied.

The training team should look for and save exemplary products which demonstrate effective use of the management concepts. These make good handouts and reference materials for future workshops.

Review at End of Day

At end of each day, the training team should meet to review the day. The project manager and selected participants may be part of the review. The review team asks themselves:

- How well were the intended objectives achieved? How do we know?

- What were the strengths of the day? The weaknesses?

- What happened that was unexpected? What new problems or opportunities emerged?

- Given what happened today, what is the plan for tomorrow?

The end of the day is the best time to develop a tentative plan for the following day. If everything happened as planned and there are no surprises, the next day's plan will be easy to develop. But if (as usually happens), there are unexpected problems or new opportunities, the plan for the next day will need revision.

The next day's plan should be discussed and the lead trainer should develop an agenda to present to the group during the morning meeting.

CHAPTER SIX: SPECIFIC WORKSHOP EXERCISES

This chapter describes several specific exercises which have produced concrete team results in past action-training workshops. This chapter is not intended as a "cookbook." Projects are unique, and a unique approach is needed for each workshop. But many of the exercises described here will fit many different workshop situations.

This chapter discusses specific exercises and guidelines, including:

- Getting started right: opening actively;
- Drawing from participant experience: characteristics of successful projects;
- Reaching agreement on strategies and objectives;
- Developing activity plans for key outputs;
- In depth work on technical aspects;
- Agreeing on roles and responsibilities;
- Action-planning for follow-up; and
- Workshop evaluation and closure.

(The trainer should also see Implementation Planning Workshops: Starting Up Projects on the Right Foot, by Merlyn Kettering, DPMC Working Paper, May, 1984. This paper suggests a 12 session workshop approach similar to that described here.)

GETTING STARTED RIGHT: OPENING ACTIVELY

Give special attention to opening the workshop in an active, participatory, stimulating way. The first hour or two normally includes:

- Welcoming remarks;
- Participant introductions;

- Identifying objectives/expectations;

- Discussion of administrative items; and

- Explanation of workshop approach.

Welcoming Remarks

Consult with the project manager to decide who should formally welcome the participants. There are three logical choices -- a higher level official, the project manager, or the trainer.

When a senior level person makes welcoming remarks, he demonstrates to participants his interest in the project and highlights the workshop's importance. In advance, explain to him the workshop purpose so he can mention how the workshop contributes to project success. Encourage him to be brief -- 15 minutes to 30 minutes is sufficient. He can leave after his remarks or stay through the rest of the opening session. But senior people should depart before the "meat" of the workshop as their presence distracts participants and inhibits discussion.

Second (or in addition), the project manager can make welcoming remarks. Following his comments and any other formalities, the project manager introduces the trainer (tell him in advance what to say about you).

Third, the trainer can make some welcoming remarks then launch into the workshop. Your first remarks should capture the interest and attention of participants. Begin with a personal anecdote or with an observation about the project or group ("I estimate there are about 200 man-years of experience sitting here today"). Others begin with a brief creativity exercise (such a "9 Dot Puzzle"), give participants a few minutes to work on it, acknowledge correct answers, share the solution, then make a transition comment (such as "We are all used to thinking in terms of certain mental frameworks. But sometimes it is necessary to use broader frameworks to solve the problem. For the next few days, we will explore some planning and management frameworks which can help solve problems you are likely to encounter during project implementation!).

Following climate-setting, he handles the introduction, discusses workshop objectives and expectations, explains the workshop approach, and covers any needed administrative items. The trainer, by his words and actions, sets an active learning climate.

Participant Introductions

Take time to "break the ice" with introductions (unless participants already know each other well). There are several ways to handle introductions. For groups of 20 or less, you can have each participant "interview" the person sitting next to him, then introduce that person to the larger group. Ask each participant to discover something about his partner's background, education, role in the project and interests. Help them pair off and give about five minutes for the interview, pointing out that each person in the dyad should interview the other. About half way through, remind them it is time to switch. When the interviews are finished, ask a volunteer to begin by introducing his partner, then have the partner introduce him. Move randomly around the room until everyone is introduced. Announce how much time each introduction should take (two minutes), then gently but firmly interrupt when the time is expired. Otherwise the introductions become very lengthy.

For groups of more than 20, this approach becomes very time consuming. For larger groups seated at a U-shaped table, each person can briefly introduce himself. If seated at small tables, have each person introduce himself individually at the small tables.

Introductions are important but they should not last too long or it becomes boring. Keep the process to not more than 45 minutes.

Identifying Expectations/Objectives

You and the project manager developed a list of workshop objectives before hand, but it is best not to present your list. Instead, involve participants in developing a similar list. Throw open the question "What are your expectations for this workshop, what do you hope to accomplish?" and write responses up on a blank flipchart. To get discussion started, ask the project manager to suggest one. Continue until there are no more suggestions, then go through the list and comment on each item.

In most cases, the list will resemble your original list. Identify those which will definitely be covered. For objectives beyond the workshop scope, explain why or how that might be treated at some later time or some other way. If items on your original list were not mentioned, you can add them with a comment "Is it also important that we _________?"

Do not rush this step. In addition to creating group involvement and discussion, setting expectations also builds participant responsibility for achieving workshop results. Post this list in a prominent location. This becomes the "contract" among workshop participants. Review progress toward them each day and at the end of the workshop.

Then discuss the tentative agenda and explain how and where items mentioned by participants will be covered. This is also a good time to cover necessary administrative items (such as per diems, meals procedures, etc.).

Explaining Workshop Approach, Agreeing On Norms

The list of objectives provides a natural introduction to discussing of workshop approach. Point out that this workshop may differ from others they have attended. Explain by referring to a flipchart prepared in advance or writing down as you go the following aspects of the workshop approach:

- A lot of work in small groups, followed by large group discussion;

- Everyone has something to teach and something to learn — everyone participates;

- The trainer is not the only expert, you all have valuable expertise to contribute;

- Formal lectures will be brief;

- "Structured flexibility" — the agenda is a guideline only, the timing and sequence of activities may change;

- Extensive "processing" of workshop activities to derive generalizable lessons; and

- Emphasis on producing practical products and useful results for the project team.

DRAWING ON PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE: CHARACTERISTICS OF PROJECT SUCCESS

The trainer must demonstrate early in the workshop what the action-training approach means. An exercise entitled "Characteristics of Project Success" is an excellent way to do this and make the transition to the substance of the workshop.

This is more than a warm-up exercise. It is an activity that calls for and draws on participant experience. It asks them to reflect on their background and apply it to the project at hand. This exercise generally takes 45-60 minutes and sets the tone for the workshop.

Here are the steps to follow to complete this activity:

1. Randomly Divide Participants - Randomly divide the participants into three or four small groups of six to eight each by having them count off around the table. (Decide before hand how many groups you will have, then have participants count off 1-2-3 or 1-2-3-4 accordingly.). Make sure everybody knows what group they are in.

2. Explain the Task - Explain that "There is much wisdom in this group that relates to successful project implementation. As I look around the room, I see roughly two hundred years of experience (or whatever the number). We want to use your expertise. We divided you into different groups and will give each group a slightly different task. You are to come up with a list of 15 to 20 answers to the question I give each group. Please listen while I explain the instructions."

Assign each group one of the following tasks. (If there are more than three groups, assign two groups the first task.)

- In this country what makes projects or non-project activities successful? For successful projects you have observed, make a list of the characteristics which made them successful.
- In this country, what are the obstacles to project success — administrative, technical, organizational, and other? Make a list of specific obstacles that cause projects to fail.
- What can project managers, team members and administrators do to help their projects succeed? Make a list of specific things that you can do to ensure success.

3. Groups Do Their Work - While small groups complete their tasks at separate tables, circulate to make sure the groups understand the tasks and observe progress. Give them about 30 minutes to work. Remind each to select a moderator, and have each group write its answers on flipchart paper.

4. Small Groups Present To Large Group - Depending on the room layout, the participants can reassemble in a plenary group or remain at the small tables. Let them remain seated where they are, if they can all see and hear the presenter. Give each group time to explain their list and respond to questions.

   During the presentations, listen carefully so you can make some comparative comments (such as the similarities, the differences and other interesting features of the presentation).

5. Trainer Comments - After the presentations by each group, commend each other on the quality, then make some comparative remarks. Comment as follows: "You have identified what is required for the project success in this country. You may be interested to know that research studies have been conducted

in many countries, including this one, on what it takes to make projects successful. Based on research of dozens of projects in many countries, six general factors have been identified. Successful projects seem to share these characteristics, while unsuccessful projects generally do not. These six factors are..." (write each on a flipchart)

- Mutual agreement on project objectives;
- Clear roles and responsibilities;
- Accurate plan, budgets, schedules;
- Mechanisms for review, follow-through and feedback;
- Mechanisms to respond to change; and
- Effective use of team processes.

"You will note that your own lists identified these same factors but perhaps in different words. (Take a few moments to show how their lists relate to these generic factors.) Research has shown that successful projects seem to share these characteristics, while unsuccessful projects generally do not."

"The main purpose of this workshop is to develop ways of achieving these six basic factors in this project. Because if you can make these things occur in your project, you have the basis for success."

(Tear off this chart and post it on the wall. During the rest of the workshop, you will make frequent reference to this chart to reinforce the generic management principles.)

REACHING AGREEMENT ON OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

It is essential that the group reach consensus on the overall project objectives and strategies. This is an appropriate activity during the first workshop and during any subsequent workshops that involve integrating new actors into the project.

There are a couple of different ways to proceed. Your choice will depend on the experience of the group itself, their background, degree of familiarity with the project and the project's complexity.

One approach is called "draw the project." Introduce it by dividing participants into small groups and instruct them to draw a picture of the project as they see it. Encourage them to be imaginative and creative. Their drawing should have a minimum of words and make maximum use of symbols, pictures, colors and other art work. Mention that this is not a test of their drawing skills and they should not be concerned about what the drawing looks like.

Make sure that each group has adequate flipchart paper and fresh marking pens in different colors. Participants will generally fumble around awhile before beginning the actual drawing. They will discuss the objectives but may find it awkward to begin the drawing. If they hesitate, push them to draw. Once they begin, it becomes fun.

After they have completed drawing, ask each to put their chart on a wall (one at a time) and explain it to the rest of the group. The rest of the group is asked to listen carefully and write down on paper the objectives they hear, whether explicit or implicit. After each group presents, lead a discussion which draws out the objectives the participants heard and write these on a chart. You should be able to get between five and eight objectives for each.

After all the groups have presented, make some comments on each list mentioning some similarities and differences. Lead a discussion which compares and contrasts the responses in an attempt to reach a synthesis. Then go through the list of objectives and pull out common ones. The end result should be an integrated list of overall objectives.

An alternate approach is to pose the question "What makes this project unique?" and have each group identify some factors that makes this project a discrete project. Then each group presents their work for comment.

Develop Means-End Analysis and Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)

You will want to organize the list of objectives into a logical array which shows how the objectives contribute to each other. To do this, work from a large blackboard or white board and simply organize the objectives previously listed into a cause effect hierarchy. You should be able to include most of the objectives on the list.

You will frequently precede this exercise with a short lecture on means-ends analysis and project hierarchies. Illustrate the principles of if-then linkages and achievement measures so that participants have a common conceptual basis for organizing objectives.

You may also take this exercise to the point of developing a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) which has a discrete and compehensive list of project tasks, which become the basis for more detailed planning.

Develop a Logical Framework

The logical framework is a powerful tool for clarifying objectives. Begin by giving a brief presentation on the key Log Frame concepts. If the group is totally unfamiliar with this tool, you may want to include in the agenda a couple hours of formal Log Frame teaching before they develop a Log Frame for the project itself.

The Logical Framework is a powerful management tool to reinforce in the project team. It can be used for planning evaluations.

Define Activity Plans for Key Outputs

The Work Breakdown Structure and Log Frame identify major components to plan in greater detail. These provide the basis for developing lists of activities for those major outputs.

Such activity lists become the basis for more detailed budgets and schedules. After having reached consensus on major outputs in the large group, you can have small groups develop detailed activity plans for all aspects of the project.

Working On Technical Concerns

What cannot be easily prescribed in a manual of this form concerns guidelines for addressing the project's specific technical concerns. For example, an agriculture planning project workshop was concerned with developing participant selection criteria and the curriculum of short-term training sessions to meet a Condition Precedent. Such technical issues constitute the major workshop focus.

There may be the need for detailed work on technical aspects of the project. This should occur only after the overall structure has been developed. Again, it is best to use small groups and have them present their work to each other.

Agreeing On Roles And Responsibilities

There will be a need to reach agreement on roles and responsibilities for carrying out project activities. Make the point that because project implementation involves many different individuals and organizations, it can suffer from coordination problems. By analyzing and agreeing to the roles and responsbilities, implementation becomes smoother.

Begin by brainstorming to identify the various actors involved and make a list of these. Then, with the group's help, develop an organization chart which lists key actors.

The next step in clarifying responsibilities is to develop a Responsibility/Agreement Chart (also called Linear Responsibility Chart).

An interesting way to approach this exercise and teach the agreement chart tool is to develop an example agreement chart on the blackboard using another topic. It is fun, for example, to ask if there are any single men in the room and if the answer is yes, say that you will help them get married. Pick one individual, bring him to the front of the room and role play with him. On the blackboard identify with the group a list of six or eight major steps in getting married. Across the top, identify the major actors, such as the man, the woman, the parents, the ministers, etc. Introduce the basic codes (responsible, participates, approves, etc.) and fill in the matrix. This can be a lot of fun and provoke laughter.

Following the example, make the learning points on how to use the Agreement Chart. Point out how it lists key activities vertically, the key people horizontally and the nature of their responsibilities with a matrix code.

Then develop an Agreement Chart for the entire project or a specific portion.

Action Planning for Follow-up

Every workshop should end with action-planning. Every individual or organization unit should develop, publicly share and take with them a list of their action items.

A good way to proceed is to let people work in natural work groups (such as organization units). They develop their items, then read them off to the larger group. The larger group has the chance to comment and to suggest other items that may have been missed. Action plans should include next steps in project implementation as well as specific follow-up to the workshop.

Workshop Evaluation and Closure

Close by having the group evaluate the workshop. Topics to discuss (and make lists of the answers) include:

- What did we really accomplish?
- What are the implications for the project?
- What did we do as a group that was effective?
- How will we monitor and follow-up our action items?
- What was not accomplished that we still need to do?

End the workshop on a high note, with sincere thanks for their good work.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CHARACTERISTICS OF ACTION-TRAINING TRAINERS

ACTION-TRAINING METHODS IN ORGANIZATIONS

Action-training is conducted within the organizational setting and for the purposes of carrying out organizational projects or activities. Live projects are used as a focus for all action-training programs. In this way, action-training is a practical response to both organizational and individual needs for obtaining competence and improving performance in both the short run and the long-term.

Action-training involves a combination of consultation, training and organization development skills to ensure that:

- the sponsoring organization as well as a specific project or effort will benefit from action-training;
- the training is operational and relevant within the real organizational context where results are expected;
- the participants have understood the concepts, tools and techniques well enough to adapt and apply them in actual situations;
- there is top management support for the training and the projects and the efforts are appropriately linked to ongoing, priority programs in the organization; and
- the participants benefit professionally by mastering new skills and are rewarded for the results they obtain.

Action-training has both a learning orientation and a results orientation. Action-training emphasizes both individual and organizational learning and results. Therefore, it is important that action-training trainers maintain an organizational perspective. Their work with the managers of the effort must begin with agreement on goals and plans to ensure understanding and support of the following action-training premises:

Action-training promotes problem-solving and opportunity-seeking which emphasizes immediate results within a long-term organizational perspective.

The major challenge of organizations is not only to solve problems and take advantage of opportunities but to raise and institutionalize management capacities throughout the organization.

To be effective, both learning and change needs to be built into the effort in ways that are "preventive" and future-oriented as well as "curative" and now-oriented.

Every effort should begin with genuine needs assessment and follow a process of planning, action, feedback, evaluation and adaptation to improve results and ensure relevance. Pre-workshop and post workshop consultations are as critical to success as the structured training events.

The process should be participative and collaborative. Key persons should be involved from the beginning to agree upon the objectives, the strategy and action plan. Planning meetings and follow-up consultations are used to build commitment, strengthen relationships and build both competence and confidence throughout the organization.

Action-training Trainers' Skills

The skill requirements of good action-training trainers are quite complex because of the nature of action-training. This is seen in the need to combine organizational and project perspectives, short-term results (action) and long-term capacity-building (learning), team as well as individual training and development and change as well as skill building.

The Development Program Management Center which has pioneered action-training, has identified behavioral skills which are important for action-training. These skill dimensions can be used for choosing and preparing action trainers to work on international development projects. The following list illustrates some of the skills which DPMC has used to assess and strengthen the skills of its trainers. The list is also useful for self-assessment following specific efforts as trainers examine their own role and performance in what happened and why.

Organizational Consultation Skills

Action-training trainers must be able to assess an organizational situation, work with top-level organizational managers and at all other levels to facilitate the identification of needs and the introduction of changes and improvements to achieve desired goals.

High Skill Indicators

- Is able to establish and maintain client relationship and and respect with top managers and persons at other levels;
- Is able to help client identify and state clearly: needs, expectations, objectives, etc.;

- Can explore alternatives and implications from points of view of the organization as a whole, of particular units and of individuals;

- Is able to identify the political as well as the functional steps in doing an action-training effort;

- Works with clients to follow a change cycle including needs assessment, planning, action, and evaluation; and

- Maintains a third-party role to help others determine how to best identify their problems, relationships.

Low Skill Indicators

- Opposite of any of above;

- Tends to impose own observations and solutions on client;

- Is easily biased by or identifies with a particular interest, person or perspective in doing an effort; and

- Jumps quickly to solutions or analyses and is not open to alternative interpretations or convictions.

Setting and Maintaining Learning Climate Skills

Action-training trainers must demonstrate the ability to initiate an action-training event by establishing and maintaining a supportive learning climate in an organization and with participants, so there is a willingness to take risks and demonstrate new skills.

High Skill Indicators

- At ease verbally and non-verbally;

- Two-way and one-way interactions;

- Self deprecating comments and humor;

- Activity relevant to learning objectives;

- Appropriate to time and risk level;
- Clear, concise communications; and
- Open to relevant changes, adaptations on the spot.

Low Skill Indicators

- Opposite of any of above;
- Rapid fire delivery of activity;
- Eyes out window or off the wall; and
- Making fun of participants/clients.

Intervention Skills

Trainers will be given opportunities to intervene on a variety of training and organizational situations and will be expected to be able to clarify understanding, agreements and instructions during action-training efforts.

High Skill Indicators

- Able to manage group learning problem situations;
- Can intervene with colleagues with elan;
- States group task instructions clearly;
- Provides guidelines and rationale for activities; and
- Clarifies expectations, products, or applications.

Low Skill Indicators

- Opposite of any of above;
- Low energy or high stress evident; and
- Allows confusion to prevail.

Leading Process Discussions Skills

Action-training trainers must be able to lead process discussions after consultation and active training events, showing the skill to lead a discussion from a general review of the efforts to a clear sense of learning points to be mastered.

High Skill Indicators

- Use of open-ended questions;
- Able to tolerate some silence;
- Can lead discussion back to learning objectives;
- Link discussion to active application/real world; and
- Maintain own and group energy during discussion.

Low Skill Indicators

- Opposite of any of above;
- Looking for "right answers"; and
- Giving "right answers";
- Loses direction/focus of discussion.

Cross Cultural Consulting Skills

Action-training trainers must be able to demonstrate the ability to manage difficult cross-cultural situations with sensitivity and tact, while still accomplishing the goals of the assignment and behaving in a profesional manner.

High Skill Indicators

- Quickly observes cross-cultural nuances;
- Communications respect for cultural values;
- Demonstrates willingness to learn;
- Assumes competence exists across cultural barriers;
- Tries to build competency in counterparts; and
- Appropriate language.

Low Skill Indicators

- Opposite of any of above;
- Puts down other culture(s);
- Treats host-country nationals as "always right."

Design of Training/Training of Trainers Skills

Action-training trainers must be skilled at writing a training plan for a target group, including clear behavioral objectives and specification of various methodologies, including a design and strategy for training of trainers.

High Skill Indicators

- Clear, crisp written objectives;
- Demonstrated awareness of active methods;
- Bias toward application of learning;
- Clear approach to training of trainers;
- Awareness of time management problems/realistic; and
- Ensures agreement of clients.

Low Skill Indicators

- Opposite of any of above;
- Repetitive activities;
- Lack of logic or flow in design or TOT; and
- Lack of sensitivity to host-country context.

Team Building Skills

Action-training trainers are often put in situations where the team roles will be ambiguous, and they will be expected to respond interpersonally in ways which will keep the team on task but able to work together.

High Skill Indicators

- o Maintain a balance between task and team process;
- o Able to paraphrase and summarize accurately;
- o Maintain coolness and perspective under fire;
- o Open-ended questioning skills; and
- o Body language congruent with words.

Low Skill Indicators

- o Opposite of any of above;
- o "Win-lose" orientation in team events;
- o Need to dominate the team; and
- o Lack of awareness of process issues.

Development Orientation and Skills

Action-training trainers must be able to demonstrate their overall approach to development issues, including their personal value base regarding development in general.

High Skill Indicators

- o Person-centered orientation;
- o Assumes competence in people being "developed";
- o Speaks of third world institutions respectfully;
- o Shows awareness of relevance of "systems" in development;
- o States bias toward skill transfer; and
- o Client-centered, third-party, problem-solving.

Low Skill Indicators

- o Opposite of any of above;
- o "We/they" syndrome when speaking of others;
- o "They" have all of the answers; and
- o Too forceful and overwhelms clients/participants.