Certificate Programme

NGO Management: Foundation Course

UNIT - 3

Planning Programmes And Working With The Community

Units of NGO Management : Foundation Course

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Introduction

For development initiatives to be effective, participation of the community in bringing about change must be encouraged. The focus on community participation in development initiatives gained strength in the 1970s and 1980s through the micro initiatives of NGOs and people's groups. In the 1990s participation acquired a central place in large-scale development projects. Most bilateral and multilateral agency initiatives now have an in-built component of ensuring people's active participation in development programmes.

In the previous Module we learnt the provisions with respect to legally registering an NGO in India and South Asia, and various rules and other compliances related to registration. In this Module, we proceed further to examine the functioning of a community. We will analyse the development of project plans and its components, along with reviewing the perspective of community participation. We will learn the various concepts associated with working with the community, including its mobilisation, participation and empowerment. Implementation, monitoring, evaluation and documentation of programmes will also be covered within the organisational context of NGOs.

Learning Objectives

After completing this Module you will be familiar with:

- The concept of project planning

- Key features of programme/project development

- Various aspects of working with the community, such as community mobilisation, participation and empowerment

- Other organisational requirements such as monitoring, evaluation and documentation of programmes

3.1 Programme Planning

3.1.1 Relevance And Rationale

An organisation functions within a large environment, and continuously interacts with it during its entire lifecycle. This interaction influences the process of evolution of the organisation, from the beginning to the end, in different ways and at different stages. Various aspects of the environment contribute to various dimensions of the organisation. Along with this, different organisations have different ways of functioning or carrying out a programme/project. In any development intervention, the importance of community participation cannot be under-estimated. However, to ensure that such participation is at an optimum level, a very carefully thought out planning process needs to be in place. This planning sets the mode for effective and successful interventions, which have the potential to change the lives of communities.

Planning is the backbone of a successful programme. Identifying and developing the programme is a pre-requisite for making an organisation functional. The vision, mission and strategy are the guiding forces in programme development. Once the programme is identified, creating projects within the ambit of the programme is useful in focusing the interventions and mobilisation of resources.

Planning involves preparing a roadmap for the completion of a project, within a certain timeframe, along with well-defined stages and designated resources. It defines project activities, the corresponding results and also describes the mode of accomplishing activities.

3.1.2 Steps To Programme Planning

Ideally, there are five steps to planning any programme which is intended to improve the welfare of a community through its participation. They are:

i. Outlining the vision, mission and strategy of the organisation

ii. Performing a needs assessment of the community

iii.   Stating project goals and objectives

iv.   Working out a plan

v.   Developing an activity schedule

vi.   Programme implementation

vii.   Monitoring and evaluation

i. Outlining The Vision, Mission And Strategy Of The Organisation

Before entering into programme planning, an organisation must establish its vision, mission, values and strategies. Vision and mission are the building blocks of an organisational strategy; hence, it is necessary to have them well-articulated.

Vision

A vision is an organisation's view of how it would like the world to be, its hope for a better future as opposed to the present reality. It is our own commitment to, and our understanding of, 'the reality to be' which provides us inspiration, momentum and strength to act. These dreams of 'the reality to be' then become our 'vision', and for its realisation we decide to act. The vision is a dream of an ideal state, which may or may not be attained within the organisation's lifetime. It presupposes change and interventions, and acts like a driving force to guide an organisation in its pursuit of social action. Vision can be created by an individual or by a group of individuals.

A vision, therefore, is an attempt to articulate the desired futures of an organisational dream or imagination that motivates people to rethink what is possible. A vision has two fundamental elements:

- To provide a *conceptual framework* for understanding the organisation's hope – the vision includes a roadmap; and

- The *emotional appeal* – that part of the vision which has motivational pull which people can identify with

A good vision statement should be clear, concise, easily understandable, memorable, exciting and inspiring. It should reflect the vision of an organisation rather than the vision of a single leader, and should evolve with time, although organisations must hold on to the core elements.

Mission

The mission statement of the organisation is one which describes its purpose or reason for existence. It describes how the organisation will contribute to achieving its societal vision. The key elements of a mission statement include: target group orientation, value orientation, organisational competencies and standards of excellence. If the vision has priority aspects clearly identified, then this forms the basis of articulation of the organisation's mission. This clearly articulated mission then becomes a source of inspiration and a reference point for future action in the organisation, sometimes for its evolution, and at other times for clarity on how to proceed further. The mission's elements specify:

- Key success factors in satisfying the client or target group (e.g., quality and quantity of service);

- Values and principles that employees stand for and rally behind;

- Organisation's capabilities that have distinguished its performance in the past and provided a foundation for the future; and

- A demanding standard of excellence that appeals to the pride and desire of all associated with the organisation.

The mission translates abstract philosophy into tangible goals that will move the organisation forward and lead it to perform optimally. It should not be limited by the constraints of strategic analysis, and should be proactive, not reactive. A mission statement serves an organisation in role clarity and motivates the staff, board members, volunteers and donors to help carry

forward the ideology of the organisation. It also helps the organisation evaluate whether its functions are in congruence with the reason for its existence.

One of the constant issues in redefining and redesigning the mission statement involves just how broad it should be. There has emerged a general view that broader mission statements may be more helpful to an organisation than narrower ones, as it can direct an organisation towards new opportunities. However, overtly broad statements run the risk of decreasing motivation and affecting evaluation. Therefore, narrower the mission, fewer the disagreements that are likely to be seen among stakeholders and the easier it is to evaluate programmes (Bandyopadhyay, 2001).

For an organisation's vision and mission to be effective, they must become assimilated into the organisation's culture. They should also be assessed internally and externally. Internal assessment should focus on how members inside the organisation interpret their mission statement. External assessment – which includes all stakeholders – is valuable since it offers a different perspective.

The distinguishing features between a vision and a mission statement are listed below:

Table 1: Comparative Features of a Vision and a Mission Statement

Vision	Mission
• Tends to be a more personalised phenomenon since it relates to a hypothetical, dream-like, long-term goal	• Indicates what we propose to do today in order to realise our vision
• Abstract	• More concrete and relates directly to present practices
• Relates to societal reality	• Relates to organisational reality
• Energises the individual	• Provides energy for collective efforts
• Difficult to change or revisit	• Can be periodically assessed and rearticulated

Vision-Mission Statements in Different Organisations

The vision and mission statements may vary across organisations. Two organisations may have the same vision, but different mission statements, depending upon different understanding of their social and political contexts. Some examples of the vision–mission statements of different types of organisations are provided in the table below for more clarity.

Table 2: Vision-Mission Statements in Different Types of Organisations

Type of Organisation	Vision	Mission
Grassroots organisation	A self-reliant rural community with improved quality of life	Participatory development, improvement in the quality of health of the rural people, and ensuring sustainability of natural resources
Grassroots activist organisation (women's rights)	A new society with equal partnership of men and women	Combating the social system of oppression and exploitation based on caste, class, ethnicity, culture, religion and gender in a comprehensive manner through community mobilisation and empowerment of women
Support organisation (building a strong voluntary sector)	A desirable world characterised by the values of equity, gender justice and freedom	Acting as a catalyst for accelerating the social and economic development of the country by supporting development organisations, which awakens and releases the energies of the people
International development organisation (children's rights)	A world where children should be able to achieve greater control over their lives	Work to achieve lasting benefits for children within the communities by influencing policy and practice based on global experience to make a reality of children's rights

Organisational Strategy

Once the mission of the organisation has been explicitly stated, the next step is to define the

organisational strategy which will lead the organisation to move in a particular direction to fulfil its mission. A strategy is a set of concepts that guide an organisation's use of its resources to pursue its mission. Once a specific strategy is formulated, the organisation has to be so designed, or redesigned, so that it is not only capable of implementing the strategy, but also details out the mechanisms of action.

If the vision indicates why the agency exists, the mission explains what changes it advocates to achieve the vision, and strategy defines how it will use its resources to accomplish those changes. Within this, the organisation's design spells out the details of whom, when, where and what activities will be carried out to fulfil the strategy.

Organisational strategy answers several questions to address and achieve organisational mission:

- What is the nature of the development problem(s) the organisation seeks to solve?

- What is the method of intervention?

- With whom (client), with what relations, and where (geographical area or location) the organisation works to achieve its mission?

- What are the resources required to accomplish the mission?

A strategy, therefore, provides the concepts that guide choices about the actions to undertake. It enables decisions about where and how to use scarce resources (time, money and people) in order to achieve maximum impact towards accomplishing the organisation's mission. The strategy statement should be short and to the point. It should be easy to communicate and understand. It should also provide guidance for decision-making and action at higher levels within the organisation.

The following are some illustrative examples of strategies of different kinds of organisations (the same organisations whose vision and mission statements have already been used as examples earlier):

Example 1: Grassroots Organisation

Development Problem	The quality of life of the people in the Kumaon region is related to the quality of natural resources. It includes educational status, general health condition and overall economic condition of the people. The unsustainable use of natural resources has adversely affected all these aspects of the lives of the poor.
Target Group	Poor and marginalised sections of the community with special emphasis on women and children
Geographical Area	Almora and Nainital districts of Kumaon region in the state of Uttarakhand
Methods of Intervention	• Organising community: Motivating, mobilising and creating village-level institutions • Raising awareness among the community on sustainable use and management of natural resources, desirable health practices and education • Capacity building: Building capacity through Information, Education and Communication (IEC).

Example 2: Grassroots Activist Organisation

Development Problem	Eexisting social values and institutions favour the perpetual unequal status of the women in society
Target Group	Women
Geographical Area	Delhi
Methods of Intervention	• Organising women and the community: Building women's organisations, community groups, fora and other forms of regular programmes • Campaign: Organising campaigns on a variety of issues aimed at institutional reforms • Providing service: Providing services related to women's health, education, legal advice and income-generation activities

Example 3: Support Organisation

Development Problem	Promoting a people-centred paradigm of development requires adequate capacity to promote voluntarism in the society. The existing institutional mechanisms and capacity of voluntary development organisations are inadequate
Target Group	Grassroots voluntary development organisations
Geographical Area	Uttar Pradesh
Methods of Intervention	• Financial support: Providing financial grants to NGOs for research, training, communication and institution building • Capacity building: Building capacity of NGOs through various methods • Policy advocacy: Influencing policies from the vantage point of enabling participation and empowerment of marginalised people • Knowledge building: Building new knowledge to bring social change involving partnership with marginalised people.

Example 4: International Development Organisation

Development Problem	Majority of children are deprived of their basic rights of health and education
Target Group	Children and their families
Geographical Area	Developing countries
Methods of Intervention	• Building partnerships: Working partnerships with local development organisations which have the advantage of being close-to-ground realities • Enabling access to basic services: Enabling access to basic services related to health and education for children, their families and community • Capacity building: Developing skills and knowledge in people for their empowerment and sustainability of development • Building and sharing knowledge: To develop appropriate responses to particular situations, the organisation will encourage work that evolves from field-based research

A well-articulated strategy thus helps in identifying and developing the programme and project. Narrowly defined, strategy is a combination of the end (goals) for which the organisation is striving and the means (policies) by which it is seeking to get there. A strategy is sometimes called a roadmap – the path chosen to flow towards the end vision. The most important part of implementing the strategy is ensuring the organisation is going in the right direction.

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Do a web search and read at least three organisations' vision, mission and strategy, and reflect how congruent they are to each other's

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ii. Performing Needs Assessment

A good plan is an informed plan, which is based on complete, dependable and relevant information. Information on those issues, in particular the ones that the organisation seeks to address, is an important pre-requisite for planning programmes and interventions. Such issues are the ones which call for attention from concerned stakeholders in order to make the lives of the communities better and sustainable. Along with identifying pressing issues, it is also important to identify the set of community which will be impacted by it. This identification of target groups helps to focus future interventions, in accordance with their needs and priorities.

Needs assessment of the target community for a particular project is the backbone of programme implementation. It caters to questions such as:

✓ What development goal is the project expected to contribute to?

✓ What are the changes the project is expected to bring to the community?

✓ What will be the project deliverables?

✓ Which community will the project cover?

✓ How will their needs be met through the project?

✓ How is community participation towards achieving the goal ensured?

✓ Which strategy would work best?

✓ Who would be the partners?

✓ What will be the responsibilities of those involved?

✓ What are the funds, expertise and other resources that will be needed?

✓ When will the work plan and progress report be prepared?

✓ What will the monitoring and review procedures be?

✓ When will the evaluation be carried out?

All these questions can be answered by the board of the organisation, staff, or the community themselves. The answers also depend on the organisation's approach to planning.

iii. Stating Project Goals And Objectives

Listing down clear goals and objectives during project planning facilitates the process of monitoring project achievements. Project teams must constantly measure how close they are to reaching each of the objectives. A project goal briefly describes what we expect the project setting to be like after the project is completed. In other words, it provides a solution to the problems faced. Therefore, a goal should be realistic, that is, it should only list down the deliverables which are practically possible, and must not extend to fancy objectives which cannot be obtained. An example of the latter is 'improving the status of women'. It should be realised that a goal such as this is huge and not possible through a single project. Along with this, the problem statement should be limited to specific problems that can be solved by the

project. Project objectives are a series of specific accomplishments designed to address the stated problems which result in attaining the desired goal of change.

There are different views about how to write goals and objectives. Some say that a goal should be broadly stated and therefore need not be measurable. Since we are presenting a solution to a problem, we want observable changes in the situation. Thus, both goals and objectives must be SMART, i.e., Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-Bound.

Specific

Goals and objectives should be straightforward and emphasise what we want to happen. Specifics help us focus our efforts and clearly define what we are going to do. It answers questions like: What are you going to do? Herein, action words such as organise, coordinate, develop, plan, build, provide, establish, etc., can be used.

Measurable

The whole goal statement is a measure for the project accomplishment. Short-term measurements can be built into goals and objectives. Observable changes should occur as the project progresses. For example, "I want to be a good reader" is not measurable, however, "I want to read 100 pages of a book every day" has a built in measurable target that can be tracked.

Attainable

Goals have to be within your reach. They are something you commit to. They should not be too easy nor too far out of your reach.

Realistic

Realistic goals are doable. This means the skills and resources needed to do the work are available, and that the project fits with the overall strategy and goals of the organisation. The overall project context should be able to support them.

Time-bound

Set a timeframe for the goal. Putting an end point on your goal gives you a clear target to work towards. If you don't set the time, there is no urgency to start taking action. Time should be realistic.

Goal

In three years, 50 per cent of the active couples in the province will have increased access to reproductive health care services.

Objectives:

1. In year 1, 3000 adults of the province will have adopted their preferred family planning methods based on the information provided to them

2. In X District, the women will have established a community pharmacy where contraceptives are readily available at affordable cost by 2013

3. Affected couples will have informed all cases requiring special gynaecological treatment to the provincial hospital during the three year project period.

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iv. Working Out A Plan

Working with the community, and working out joint programmes with them, constitutes an extremely important step in the process of programme planning. Project planning with the community demands three critical things (Nunavut Literacy Council, 2009):

1. Knowing the community

Before you begin to plan your programmes, you should familiarise yourself with all the local programmes in the community. Which are the organisations already active in the area? What services are being provided? Which are the needs that are not being met? This information will help you avoid duplicating services and ensuring that your programme is filling a critical gap.

2. Knowing the resources

You should also familiarise yourself with the source of funding and support, which can be found at the local, regional and national levels.

3. Building partnerships

Community-based organisations are more likely to experience success if they work together. Partnerships allow organisations to learn from each other, increase programme efficiency and improve the quality of services provided.

Additionally, working out plans in conjunction with the community demands specific steps to be followed in a particular order. These steps can be categorised as those to be taken care of before, at and after the planning session. Details are given in the section below:

Before The Planning Session:

1.   Identify the needs of the community

As regards to the needs of the community, there are some problems that you need to assess, such as:

✓   What issue does the community need to address?
✓   Are young people dropping out of school?
✓   Are young people losing their culture and language?

Therefore, you need to interact with the local people and find out the needs of the communities and their priority concern areas.

2.   Ask the people to come to a meeting in order to discuss their ideas

It is important to note that local projects and community development affect everyone. Hence, you also need to ensure the participation of people from varied sections in such meetings.

3.   Find a facilitator for the meeting

If possible, it is desirable to arrange a local person who is skilled enough to facilitate the meeting.

4.   Find a space to hold the meeting

You also need to locate an appropriate venue, considering the concerns of the people, who may not be very comfortable with public spaces such as a school or a local training centre.

5.   Create an agenda and distribute it among the people before the meeting

It is always beneficial to have a pre-decided agenda before embarking on a meeting. This helps to hold the discussion in a focussed manner, and come out with fruitful results and recommendations.

At The Planning Session

1.   Discuss different options

Every individual must have an equal chance to share their ideas for their community. This will give way to an exhaustive discussion and would explore multiple options with respect to addressing the challenges faced by the community.

2.   Make a note of the ideas

You need to ensure that all the emerging ideas in the discussion are noted down on flip charts, so as to avoid missing out on any crucial point at the end of the meeting.

3.   Make sure everyone gets a chance to share

Often the more dominant voices in a meeting have the final say. To prevent such a situation, and to encourage the reluctant voices to come up with their ideas, discussions may be held in small groups.

4.   Initiate an outline for the project proposal

You must complete at least the goals, objectives and the work plan by the end of the discussion session. You may also ask the participants if anyone is interested in forming a working group to continue to work on the proposal and the project idea.

After The Planning Session:

1.   Pitch your project idea to a funder

It is desirable to share the idea of the project with prospective funders before going ahead with the project proposal. It would save a lot of your time and energy.

2.   Complete the proposal

The proposal, if completed well within time and desirably, soon after the planning session concludes, gives a direction for future strategies and actions.

3.   Conduct meetings with the working group

It would be good to meet the working group and discuss the ideas at frequent intervals to keep the momentum going.

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Good community-based planning creates opportunities for working together and results in activities that benefit the whole community. To be effective, a community-based planning process should:

- ✓ Involve community people, groups and organisations in the design of the programme and projects from the beginning
- ✓ Make sure that people with different abilities and literacy levels are able to participate in the design of the project
- ✓ Consider how to make the best use of community strengths and resources
- ✓ Respond to local needs and interests
- ✓ Build in ways to review how project activities are going and make changes as needed
- ✓ Include opportunities for local people to develop their skills, knowledge and experience
- ✓ Raise awareness about what is being planned
- ✓ Increase the sense of local ownership
- ✓ Lead to shared responsibility, increased local partnerships and relationships

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Apart from defining the major tasks and activities, it is equally important to ensure the availability of resources to carry out the same. This holds true both monetarily and temporally, since both of these factors play a crucial role in the smooth functioning of programmes and their success.

v. Developing An Activity Schedule

Goals and objectives can only be achieved when specific activities are designed to attain them. Project teams have to go back to the goals and objectives as well as the strategies identified to carry them out. An activity schedule is a method of presenting the activities of a project, which identifies their logical sequence and any dependencies that exist between them. It provides a basis for allocating management responsibility for completing each activity. With

the activity schedule prepared, the job of further specifying inputs and scheduling costs can be started.

Checklist For Preparing An Activity Schedule

Step 1: List the main activities

The main activities are a summary of what the project must do in order to achieve project objectives. In identifying the main activities, the project team must also consider the main strategies that will be used to carry out these objectives.

Step 2: Breaking down broad activities into manageable tasks

The purpose of breaking activities into sub-activities or tasks is to make them sufficiently simple to be organised and managed easily. The technique is to break an activity down into its component sub-activities and then to take each sub-activity and break it down into its component tasks. Each task can then be assigned to an individual and becomes their short-term goal.

Step 3: Clarifying sequence and dependencies

Once the activities have been broken down into sufficient detail, they must be related to each other to determine their:

- Sequence – in what order should related activities be undertaken?

- Dependencies – is the activity dependent on the start-up or completion of any other activity?

For example, building a house consists of a number of separate but interrelated activities, such as digging and laying the foundation, etc. The sequence dictates that digging and laying the foundation comes before building the walls. This particular example illustrates dependencies.

Step 4: Estimating start-up, duration and completion of activities

Specifying the timing refers to making a realistic estimate of the duration of each task, and then integrating it into the activity schedule in order to establish the likely start up and completion dates. But, often, it may not be possible to estimate timing with complete confidence. To ensure that the estimates are at least realistic, those who have the necessary technical knowledge or experience should be consulted.

Step 5: Summarising scheduling of main activities

Having specified the timing of the individual tasks that make up the main activities, it is useful to provide an overall summary of the start, duration and completion of the main activity itself.

Step 6: Defining milestones

Milestones provide the basis by which project implementation is monitored and managed. They are key events that provide a measure of progress and a target for the project team to aim for. Simple milestones include the estimated dates for completion of a particular activity.

Step 7: Defining expertise

When the tasks are known, it is possible to specify the type of expertise required. Often the available expertise is known in advance. Nonetheless, this exercise provides a good opportunity to check whether the action plan is feasible given the human resources available.
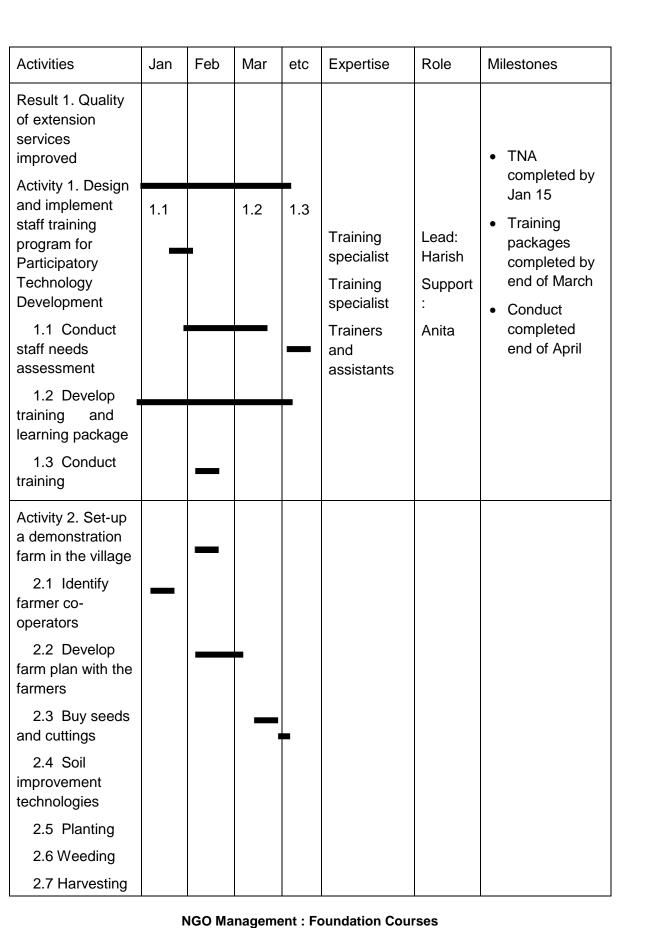
Step 8: Allocation of tasks among the teams and its members

This involves more than just saying who does what. When tasks are allocated, the responsibility for achieving project milestones is also allocated. In other words, it is a means of defining each team member's accountability – to the project manager and to other team members. Task allocation must therefore take into account the capability, skills and experience of each member of the team.

Step 9: Presenting an activity schedule

All the information in an activity schedule can be summarised in a graphical form. This is called a Gantt Chart. The format can be adapted to fit with the expected duration of the project. An overall project schedule may only specify activities on a quarterly or monthly basis while an individual's quarterly work plan may use a weekly format.

Below is a simplified version of a Gantt Chart prepared for a particular project. It lists the various activities vertically, while the months are depicted horizontally. (Three months have been listed as an example since this chart is only for reference purposes.) The bold lines in black spanning the months indicate the estimated duration for the corresponding activity. Also listed alongside are other aspects such as expertise, role, milestones, for which the necessary information can be fed into the chart for the corresponding activity.

Activities	Jan	Feb	Mar	etc	Expertise	Role	Milestones
Result 1. Quality of extension services improved							
Activity 1. Design and implement staff training program for Participatory Technology Development	1.1		1.2	1.3	Training specialist Training specialist Trainers and assistants	Lead: Harish Support: Anita	• TNA completed by Jan 15 • Training packages completed by end of March • Conduct completed end of April
1.1 Conduct staff needs assessment							
1.2 Develop training and learning package							
1.3 Conduct training							
Activity 2. Set-up a demonstration farm in the village							
2.1 Identify farmer co-operators							
2.2 Develop farm plan with the farmers							
2.3 Buy seeds and cuttings							
2.4 Soil improvement technologies							
2.5 Planting							
2.6 Weeding							
2.7 Harvesting							

2.8 Identifying good practices and needed improvement						

vi. Programme Implementation

Implementation of the programme as per the work plan involves community participation in a way that the very people who face those challenges in their daily lives are the ones taking decisions on addressing/mitigating the same. It includes working with the people, and using their ideas and incorporating their vision in search of sustainable solutions. This involves various concepts such as community mobilisation and participation.

Community Mobilisation And Participation

Community mobilisation is a term which is frequently used in the development sector. It has been proved to be a valuable and effective concept in ensuring participation and empowerment of the community. It is a process through which action is stimulated by the community itself, or by others, and is planned, carried out and evaluated by individuals of the same community, groups and organisations on a participatory and sustained basis. The objective of such an exercise is to improve the livelihood, health, hygiene, education levels, etc, of the community, in order to enhance their overall living standards.

Alternatively, it can be viewed as a process which begins a dialogue among the members of the community in order to determine the issues, and also to provide an opportunity for everyone to participate in the decisions that impact their lives. Therefore, community mobilisation primarily aims at initiating a process of enabling community participation that leads to community empowerment.

> *Community* refers to a village or a group of villages with families inhabiting them, who are dependent on one another in their day-to-day transactions to mutual advantage.
>
> *Community Participation* is active involvement of people in planning, implementing and monitoring of a programme which is for their well-being.
>
> *Community Mobilisation* is the process of bringing together or empowering members of the community from various sectors to raise awareness on and demand for a particular development programme. It facilitates change and development taking into account the felt needs of the community and leads to community organisation.
>
> *Community Empowerment* refers to the process of enabling communities to gain control over their lives, through controlling factors and decisions that shape it. It is the process by which they increase their assets and attributes and build capacities to gain access, partners, networks and/or a voice.

Participatory Approaches In Community Mobilisation

Participatory approaches in mobilisation and facilitation encourage discussion and debate, and thereby result in increased knowledge and awareness along with a higher level of critical thinking. Critical thinking enables communities to understand the interplay of forces operating on their lives and helps them take their own decisions. Herein, participation assumes a broader role in not just taking part in a process, but determining the conditions that shape the lives of the people. The different schools of thoughts regarding these participatory approaches are:

Social Movement Perspective

This perspective refers to participation as people's mobilisation aimed at eliminating unjust hierarchies of knowledge, power and economic distribution. This perspective identifies the goal of participation as an empowering process for the people, as a result of which they begin to handle challenges and influence the direction of their own lives. Empowerment participation is when primary stakeholders are capable and willing to initiate the process and take part in the analysis. This leads to joint decision making regarding the achievements and the manner in

which to attain them. While external stakeholders are equal partners in the development effort, the primary stakeholders are *primus inter pares*, i.e., they are equal partners with a significant say in decisions concerning their lives. Dialogues identify and analyse critical issues and facilitate exchange of knowledge and experience, which leads to solutions. Ownership and control of the process rests in the hands of the primary stakeholders.

Institutional Perspective

This perspective holds participation as being the reach and inclusion of inputs by relevant groups/stakeholders in the design and implementation of a development project. It uses the inputs and opinions of relevant groups, or stakeholders, in a community as a tool to achieve a pre-established goal defined by an external stakeholder. Herein, the various issues to be addressed are divided into stages, and this division facilitates assessment of when and to what degree a participatory approach is relevant. From an institutional perspective (also referred to as a '*Project-Based Perspective*'*),* the four key stages of a development project are:

- **Research Stage**

  Here, the development problem is accurately defined. All relevant stakeholders can be involved in this process. The research around the development problem includes studying previous experiences, individual and community knowledge and attitudes, existing policies and other relevant contextual information related to socio-economic conditions, culture, spirituality, gender, etc.

- **Design Stage**

  This stage defines the actual activities to be undertaken. A participatory approach helps to secure the ownership and commitment of the communities involved. Active participation by local citizens and other stakeholders aims to enhance both the quality and relevance of the suggested interventions.

- **Implementation Stage**

  Herein, the planned intervention is implemented. Participation at this stage increases commitment, relevance and sustainability.

- **Evaluation Stage**

  Community participation in the evaluation stage ensures that the most significant changes are voiced and brought to common attention and assessed. For a meaningful evaluation, indicators and measurements should be defined through a participatory process at the very beginning of the initiative, involving all the relevant stakeholders.

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Forms Of Participatory Participation

1. **Passive participation** is the least participatory of all the approaches. Primary stakeholders are merely informed about what is going to happen or what has already happened. People's feedback is minimal or non-existent, and their participation is assessed through methods like head counting and contribution to the discussion (sometimes referred to as participation by information).

2. **Participation by consultation** is an extractive process, whereby stakeholders provide answers to questions posed by external researchers or experts. Input is not limited to meetings and can be provided at different times. In the final analysis, however, this consultative process delegates all the decision-making power in the hands of external professionals who are under no obligation to incorporate stakeholders' inputs.

3. **Participation by collaboration** forms groups of primary stakeholders to participate in the discussion and analysis of predetermined objectives set by the project. This level of participation does not usually result in dramatic changes in what should be accomplished, and which is often already determined. It does, however, require active involvement in the decision-making process about how to achieve it. This incorporates a component of horizontal communication and capacity building among all stakeholders – a joint collaborative effort.

4. **Empowerment participation** is where primary stakeholders are capable and willing to initiate the process and take part in the analysis. This leads to joint decision making about what should be achieved and how. While outsiders are equal partners in the development effort, the primary stakeholders are *primus inter pares*, i.e., they are equal partners with a significant say in decisions concerning their lives.

Process And Techniques Of Community Participation

There are many ways of ensuring community participation, which may vary as per the

respective organisation's perspective towards it. Some organisations use participation as a means to ensure the success of a project by involving communities in activities, while others engage the community throughout the process aiming at community ownership and empowerment. Ideally, community participation should not be restricted or limited to participation in delivery, but also in assessing a community's needs, defining the problems and designing the project. Engagement of the community at the preliminary level facilitates their participation during the project implementation phase as well. Such a participatory process can contribute in numerous ways:

- Building rapport with the community

- Educating and mobilising the people

- Organising the community and building their capacities

- Involving the community in planning, implementation and monitoring of the programme.

At the community level, there are a number of formal and informal people's institutions as well as governance institutions. In India, panchayati raj members, sarpanches/mukhiyas/pradhans, religious and local leaders, mahila mandal members, youth club members, self-help groups and others could help in eliciting community participation. The techniques of eliciting community participation include:

- Community meetings

- Advocacy campaigns

- Street plays, skit or drama

- Folk media and folk songs

- Exhibition/sports meets

- PLA techniques

THINK TANK

You have read about community mobilisation and participation. Now, assume that you are working on a water management programme in a rural village aimed at improving the community's access to water resources. What are the techniques/methodologies that you will employ with respect to the following:

(i)   Awareness generation
(ii)   Community mobilisation
(iii)   Ensuring people's participation

Also, list down the challenges that you feel may arise during this process.

vii. Programme Monitoring And Evaluation

Along with programme implementation, a system for monitoring and evaluation of programmes is equally essential. A proper record and check on the activity ensures that they are on track to deliver the results they are intended to. Such a review and control framework also helps to keep things in order and ensure that the process goes on as planned, along with tracking the effectiveness and the impact of the entire initiative.

Monitoring and evaluation of a project should start at the stage of appraisal and project design, and not when the project has already been approved and its implementation begun. It helps build clarity of thought along with the production of a more refined statement of the project objectives, assumptions, indicators and activities. The cost of monitoring and evaluation can be allocated at the outset and the users can participate in designing an appropriate monitoring and evaluation system, which is acceptable and useful for their needs and not just for project and donor use.

Monitoring is basically tracking the progress of a project. It is performed during project implementation for the purpose of improving project design and its functioning. It is an internal project function designed to provide constant feedback on the progress of the project towards achieving its goals and objectives, the problems faced and efficacy of implementation. It is a

continuous process and helps project teams learn from mistakes and take corrective action when necessary. It uses both formal reporting and informal communication.

Monitoring can be of different types:

- ***Institutional monitoring***

    It refers to the internal monitoring of financial, physical and organisational issues associated with the project.

  i. Financial monitoring tracks project inputs and costs of activities;
 ii. Physical monitoring tracks the distribution and delivery of project activities and outputs;
iii. Organisational monitoring tracks sustainability, institutional development and capacity building in the project and direct partners.

- ***Context monitoring***

    It refers to tracking the context in which a project is operating as it affects critical assumptions and risks associated with the project. This includes monitoring institutions and policies that may affect the capacity of the project to act or the capability of the target population to respond to the project.

- ***Results monitoring***

    It includes tracking project effects/outcomes and impacts. Concerns about effects are handled to some extent during monitoring, but mostly by evaluation. Assessment of impacts is principally in the domain of evaluation. However, data about project effects and impacts are collected during periodic monitoring assessments.

- ***Objectives monitoring***

    It is a process of tracking project objectives and strategies for continued relevance to the target population and its changing needs.

Evaluation of a project studies the outcome of a programme or project with the aim of informing the design of future programmes. It is a periodic assessment, and involves analysis and use of data regarding the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, economic and financial viability, and sustainability of a project vis-à-vis its objectives. The purpose of evaluation is to review the achievements of a project against planned expectations and to use the experience from the project to improve the design of future projects and programmes. It draws on routine reports produced during implementation.

3.2 Programme Documentation

Another important aspect in programme implementation is documentation. Good documentation not only supports the organisation's work, but also ensures its credibility in the eyes of various stakeholders. Being a registered entity, there are many legal obligations which an organisation has to adhere to with respect to submitting reports and other documents. On the other hand, some organisations may be involved in diverse sectors of health, agriculture, education, development and the economy. Consequently, they require documentation in the form of proposals, reports, case studies or process documents in order to help them in their daily functioning and communication with various stakeholders.

For strengthening documentation, one of the most important steps in developing an information system is to identify the users of that information. Once users have been identified, it is possible to determine the kind of information they need and for what purposes. Some people may be interested in the achievements and lessons learnt through a project, e.g., other NGOs working with similar target populations in another district. Other people may want such information that can facilitate their participation in various decisions related to the project. The latter groups are often referred to as 'stakeholders', or potential 'owners' of the project.

Stakeholders include all persons or groups who have the capacity to make or influence decisions that have an impact on project design or implementation. Ultimately, all stakeholders may be involved in different phases of a project; therefore, they should be consulted and informed regularly about project planning and developments. Involving potential users (especially project management, staff and target population) in the design of a project will not only help them be up-to-date regarding the developments, but also ensure their support to the information management system and utilisation of its findings.

Key categories of people and organisations who may be interested in obtaining information include:

- Community (sometimes called 'clients' or 'beneficiaries' or 'target population'): May be individual community members, families, community groups, or whole villages. Specific categories of importance may include community leaders, target groups in the community and the community at large.

- Local organisations: Community-based Organisations (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). CBOs are potential local collaborators, e.g., mutual assistance societies.
- Government: Policy makers and planners; includes district officials, officials in line ministries and politicians like Members of Parliament.
- Project staff: Team at different levels
- Donors: Funders, external support agencies

Additional categories of persons or organisations which may need to be considered in some projects:

- Potential funders of some projects, and professional colleagues with shared interests
- Academicians, researchers, consultants: Shared professional interests, potential for further analysis and alternative applications of project information
- Media, journalists: Dissemination of significant results; showing transparency and public accountability

Therefore, it is important to carefully manage documentation activities in an organisation. Document management controls the life cycle of documents – how they are created, reviewed, published, consumed, and ultimately disposed of or retained.

The advantages of a well-designed document are:

- It facilitates locating and sharing information
- It organises content in a logical way, and makes it easy to standardise content creation and presentation across the organisation
- It promotes knowledge management and information mining
- It helps the organisation fulfill its legal obligations

Summary

This Module looked into the concept of project planning and the various steps involved in the process. The components of project planning and development, and working with the community with respect to their mobilisation and participation were examined. The importance of programme monitoring and evaluation and what it entails was analysed. You were also briefed about the importance of documentation of programmes in ensuring the sustainability and credibility of an organisation.

Required Readings

- Chadha, P., Jagadananda, & Lal, G. (2003). Understanding effectiveness of NGDOs- A conceptual framework. In P. Chadha, Jagadananda, & G. Lal, *Organizational behaviour: A framework for non-governmental development organizations* (pp. 60-139). Bhubaneswar: CYSD.

- Fowler, B. (1997). *Pierre Bourdieu and cultural theory: Critical investigations*. London, California and New Delhi: Sage Publications.

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Nunavut Literacy Council. (2009). *Tools for community building: A guide to help people plan projects in their community.* Retrieved August 1, 2014, from ILITAQSINIQ: http://www.ilitaqsiniq.ca/sites/default/files/files/tools_for_community_building.pdf