MODULE 3

DEVELOPING OBJECTIVE-ORIENTED PROGRAM

BISHNU B. BHANDARI

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Contents

About the material

Welcome to this package of educational materials.

The package is prepared for promoting community awareness and action on the conservation and management of wetlands and wetland resources.

The package has four modules targeted for different groups of people in a community. These are,
Module 1: Let us keep our wetland healthy
Module 2: What is happening to our freshwater resources?
Module 3: Developing objective-oriented program
Module 4: Participatory rural appraisal (PRA)

This package and its modules are based on the two assumptions.

1. **Environmental problems are a common concern, the solution of which requires the active and responsible involvement of the entire community.**

Explanation: A community consists of diverse groups of people. They have different viewpoints on the community problem. Some know the problem fully while others may not know it at all, or know it only partially. Similarly, some may be highly vulnerable to the problem, while others may be only partially vulnerable, or not at all. In order to tackle this common problem, the concerns and needs of these groups should be addressed fully.

So, identify stakeholders of the community (students, parents, teachers, local leaders, NGO representatives, etc.).

2. **The collective action is possible only when all stakeholders of a community develop a clear common understanding about the issue.**

Explanation: Different groups should be brought together; they should be made aware of. Once they realize the situation, they need to be taught in a way they develop the common

understanding about the issue, particularly managing and tackling them jointly. For this, the following steps are proposed.

(1) **Learn (L)** about the issue thoroughly
(2) **Experience** and **evaluate (E)** the knowledge
(3) **Adapt (A)** the knowledge for your community
(4) **Promote (P)** the knowledge

This is what has been called the LEAP method, which represents the first letter of the sequence of the "**L**earn, **E**xperience and **E**valuate, **A**dapt and **P**romote" steps. A short description of each step is given below.

Step 1: Learn (L) about the issue thoroughly

Before putting them into action, participants should understand the issue and be fully aware of it, especially its nature, scope, context, responsible factors and its possible solution. But participants cannot do it without any guidance. Here lies the responsibility of a facilitator. Only an informed facilitator can pass the information effectively on to the participants.

Taking these things into consideration, materials on different topics have been put together in a simple way. The facilitator should read it carefully and understand the issue thoroughly. Then he/she should teach participants with the help of the teaching outline annexed.

Step 2: Experience and evaluate (E) the knowledge

Once the participants understand the matter thoroughly, they should be given the chance to apply their new knowledge in the real world of work. The direct and first hand experience facilitates them to integrate theory into practice. The hands-on experience enables them to evaluate the topic in terms of its practicality, replication and sustainability. In fact, this step is crucial to participants to make any decision on whether to take the issue seriously or drop it off completely. Participants gain the first-hand experience while applying the knowledge in the real life situation.

Step 3: Adapt (A) the knowledge for your community

The knowledge and skills will be in limbo if they are not used. They will be stagnant and become a dead wood. The knowledge should be lively and living by using it time and again. Participants should think of a site, where they can adapt it so that the acquisition becomes a regular practice.

Step 4: Promote (P) the knowledge

The knowledge should not be confined to the facilitator and the participants only. They should, in turn, share their knowledge with others until the idea becomes integrated into the practice. The knowledge should be disseminated as much as possible. Participants have to build up the capacity of the community to retain, use and promote the knowledge.

Tips for the facilitator

Who can be the facilitator? A teacher, NGO representative, social worker or researcher having an interest in the conservation of wetlands can be a facilitator. The main function of the facilitator is to impart knowledge and skills to the participant. Prior to the use of this material, the facilitator should read and understand the intention of this package.

1. Read the material and understand the basic concept of the issue thoroughly.
2. Understand the expectations and experiences of each participant at the beginning of the session. This will enable you to plan your activities for the session.
3. Conduct the session at or near the site as far as possible so that you will be able to deal with the real world. Use local examples, resources and hands-on experiences. Let them use their all six senses.
4. Use the teaching outline included in the booklet. This has been provided to help the facilitator concentrate on how to present the materials to participants.
5. Try to use the problem-solving methods of teaching such as demonstration, field visit, issue-based discussion, etc. in a way participants get a maximum opportunity in hands-on activities.
6. Guide participants to develop a plan of action on the application as well as dissemination of the knowledge in the community.

Should you have any comments or suggestions on this booklet, please send them to the following address.

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Developing objective-oriented program

Why this module
Knowing only technical aspect of a problem is not enough to get the solution. Equally important is the social science aspect of the solution. In other words, the participant should know some management skills such as making a good program, implementing it effectively, allocation of resources based on priority and so forth. This module attempts to provide the participant with some information required for developing a good program.

Issue
Efficient use of resources

Target
NGOs, CBOs and local organizations

Objective
To enable the participant to develop a grassroots conservation program systematically.

Demonstrated ability
At the end of the instruction the participant should be able to discuss, describe and explain major concepts of program planning & its reconsiderations.

Step 1: Learn (L) about the issue thoroughly

The module has been divided into four parts; (1) why a planned program, (2) importance of a good program, (3) different approaches of planning, and (4) how can we develop a good program?

Part 1: Why a planned program?

There are always great ideas around us. These ideas are sometimes spontaneous. Sometimes they spring out of our enthusiasm. And sometimes they come out of our desire to do a good job.

Some people simply go ahead with action while others take time to plan and act. Some do not care about these ideas. Without a planning, ideas cannot be translated easily into actions. If acted, failure is bound to occur and thus a great loss of time, energy, resources, etc.

Also, actions may fail, or may not complete, if there is;
- Lack of money
- Lack of manpower
- Lack of resources
- Lack of time

In order to realize good ideas, it is important to plan activities and resources properly. That is why a good program is a pre-requisite to success.

A good program:
- Is a guideline to get the things done
- Is a road map (a compass or a blueprint) to reach the end point
- Is a systematic document answering basic questions related to 6Ws **(what, why, who, how, where and when)**. See the Box 1 for six helpers.
- Should consist of a clear goal statement, needed resources, schedules, risk aversion measures and even alternatives. It

should also state the target and the place, where it is going to be implemented.

A good program should have the following qualifications, in short, called SMART which stands for,

S = specific
M = measurable
A = achievable
R = realistic
T = time- bound

Box 1: Six helpers

1. **What** is a program?
   - What is the issue or the problem?
   - What are its aim and objectives?
   - What are its expected outcomes?
   - What will its impact be?
   - What resources do we have?

2. **Why** is the program needed?
   - Justification
   - Significance
   - Advantages
   - Intended use

3. **Who** will do and who will be the beneficiary?
   - Who is the responsible person?
   - Who are the stakeholders?
   - Who are the target groups?
   - Who are the people affected by the program?
   - Who are the beneficiaries?

4. **How** will the program be undertaken?
   - Approach
   - Method
   - Tools
   - Techniques
   - Indicators of success

5. **Where** will the program be executed?

6. **When** will the program be completed?
   - How much time is required?

Part 2: Importance of a program

A program;

- Helps us do things systematically such as monitoring and evaluation, minimizing risks, focusing activities, meeting deadlines and schedules, utilizing resources, etc.
- Is the recorded evidence of our determination to do something.
- Enhances the confidence of those who are committed to do something.
- Serves as a strategic means to receive active cooperation and collaboration of stakeholders and target groups.

So, ideally a good program helps us;

- Identify the problem, objectives, opportunities and threats
- Evaluate the end results
- Plan follow-on activities
- Implement the program and re-plan it, if necessary

Box 2: Difference between a program and a project

Usually these two terms are used synonymously. However, they are different.

A **program** is a continuing, long-term activity.

A **project** is a short-term and specific activity; it has limited resources. It means any thing not done before; it has a beginning and an end. Any project is part of a program

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Part 3: Different approaches of planning

There are numerous approaches of planning but the common ones are presented below.

- **Top-down approach** (initiated from the top level for the benefits of the grassroots with or without their knowledge. Their involvement is not necessary.)
- **Bottom-up approach** (initiated from the grassroots level by the concerned people for their own benefits. They may be assisted externally.)
- **Convergent approach** (using the combination of any of these approaches. It is called the middle-of-the way approach.)

We are interested in the **bottom-up approach** because this is the most common and important method adopted in the **decentralized program planning**.

In some countries, centrally controlled planning and client-oriented planning methods are in use. These methods will not be discussed here.

Part 4: How can we develop a good program?

There are many steps but planners have identified six steps. They are;

1. Development of a vision
2. Identification of the problem
3. Formulation of the objective
4. Allocation of resources
5. Evaluation
6. Reconsiderations

These six steps are presented below in the way of a cycle, the short description of each is given in the next page.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of a planning cycle

1. Vision

2. Problem Identification

3. Objective Formulation

4. Resource Allocation

5. Evaluation

6. Reconsiderations
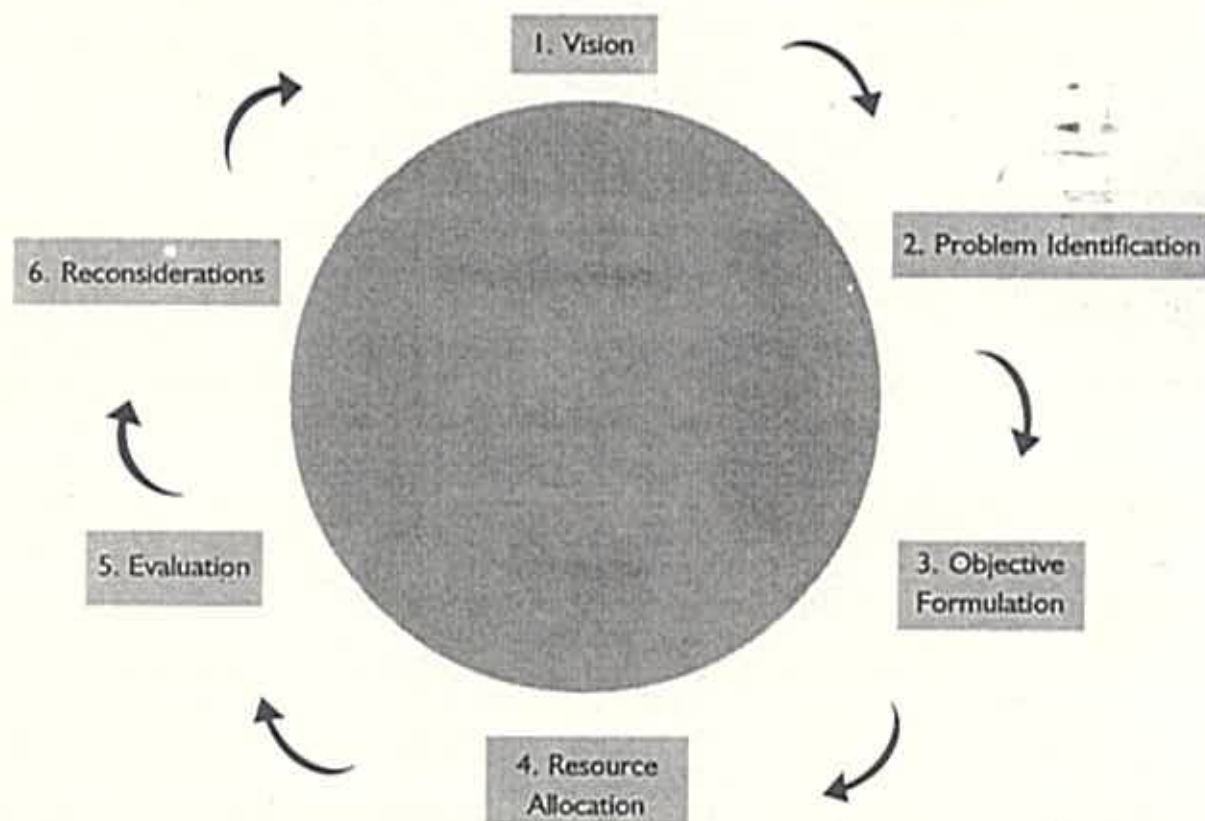
1. Development of a vision

Vision is a dream, or an ideal stage we wish to achieve. It may be just an idea. It does not have to be practical and realistic. It is just broad and futuristic statements as

1. Environmentally healthy world
2. Sustainable future
3. High quality of life
4. Healthy population
5. A sustainable future
6. Education for all
7. An equitable and just society

In order to realize this vision, we should break up this big picture into simple and practical objectives/tasks.

Note: A mission is a statement of our will and determination to reach the end-point. It is a statement of our duty, obligation and responsibility.

Exercise 1

Let each participant make a vision of their life, characterize it and discuss with one another.

2. Identification of the problem

The problem is a principal question that needs to be answered. It needs to be stated clearly so that all the concerned understand the meaning in the same way. A problem can be stated well if the situation, target and places are already known. One requires a thorough assessment of a situation.

So, an assessment of a situation is necessary.

Assessment is a process of determining realities, opportunities and threats of the problem. It is done in order to assist the planner. It helps the planner to;
- Identify major issues or questions
- Plan and manage resources
- Know the interlinkage between variables
- Understand uncertainties and risks
- Have the knowledge about resources

The problem should be stated in a question form. The necessary information can be collected through;
- Walking in group, talking, making observation, etc.
- Organizing meetings
- Reviewing the published materials
- Conducting detailed study on a topic
- Using participatory techniques
- Making survey and study

3. Formulation of the objective

Make your end-point simple, concise and clear.

Goal is a broad statement, usually of long-range, addressing issues which have been identified as the cause of our concern. It should coincide with the philosophy of an organization.

Objective is the break up of a goal into a series of small end points (or results) that are consistent with the stated goal. The objective should always be specific, measurable, realistic and time bound.

Brainstorming is a good method of listing problems or objectives. It gives the participant an opportunity to clear doubts and questions that may arise; it supports a free and frank expression of views; it sets a pace for confidence; it gains the support of all those responsible for the achievement of the objectives.

Exercise 2

Each student should write at least five measurable objectives.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

4. Allocation of resources

Allocation of resources is critical in planning a program. Without resources, the end point can not be achieved. It is easy to allocate resources, if we know major tasks.

What is a task?

A task is the break up of an objective expressed into many achievable ways. It should be as specific as possible. Some of the resources should be clearly mentioned in the document (see Table 1 below)

Table 1: Major tasks and resource allocation

No	Major task	Materials needed	Budget	Time	Responsible person	Some milestones
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						

Exercise 3

Ask the participant to develop major tasks and its sub-tasks.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. Evaluation

Evaluation is an on-going process and is done for two purposes. One is to keep check on the process such as how things are moving or being done, compliance to rules, etc. The other is evaluation, which is done to determine the following.

- Has the plan met what is said?
- What are its strengths & weaknesses?
- What are the problems it has been facing?
- What are the opportunities and threats?
- What are its recommendations?

Based on the results, the program should be re-visited and re-implemented in the future.

The simple method to evaluate a program is SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis.

How do you monitor your activities?

1. Look at the program if every thing is going as planned.
2. Has the problem been solved in a participative manner?
3. Are the logistics going well?
4. How is the staff's spirit?
5. Are the concerned parties given due regard?
6. Are the consensus and confidence building activities going well?

6. Reconsiderations

The findings of the evaluation should be discussed with the concerned parties; the suggestions should be taken into account; the draft should be revised accordingly.

Step 2: Experience and evaluate (E) the knowledge

Activities

Activities that allow the participants, not only doing but also thinking and evaluating what they have learnt, should be carried out in this step.

Method (s)

1. Ask the participants to write at least five clear objectives, tasks, vision, etc.
2. Split the group into several sub-groups and conduct brain-storming on a particular topic.
3. Take the participant around the community to assess their needs.
4. Assign each student to collect data and information on some local resource. Let them make the plan; employ the tool; and share experiences with others.
5. Let the participant develop a program collectively.

Step 3: Adapt (A) the knowledge for your community

Activities

Participants should develop a plan of action for their own community under the guidance of the facilitator. They should discuss, give their inputs and thoughts and look at how the concept, idea and knowledge are modified.

Method (s)

1. Split the participants into 3-4 small groups.
2. Discuss the ways they want to tackle the problem and issues.
3. Develop a tentative guideline for adapting a plan.
4. Regroup them for discussion and sharing experiences.

Output

A general framework for adapting a plan

Community at action in Cambodia (Photo: M. Takahashi)

Step 4: Promote (P) the knowledge

Activities

Participants should be divided into smaller groups to discuss their individual plans on disseminating the idea and information. They should be clear about target. The plan should be realistic and simple; it should focus on publicity, dissemination, capacity building, advocacy, empowering and others.

Output

A plan of action for dissemination

References

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Developing objective oriented program

Assumptions

- The environmental problem is a common concern, the solution of which requires the active and responsible involvement of the entire community.
- The collective action is possible only when all stakeholders of a community develop a clear and common understanding about the issue.

Target & objective

- **Target:** NGOs, CBOs and local organizations
- **Objective:** To enable the participant to develop a grassroots conservation program.

Step 1: Learn about the issue thoroughly

1. Why a planned program?
2. Importance of a good program
3. Different approaches of planning
4. How can we develop a good program?

Difference between program and project?

- Sometimes used synonymously. In some place, they have different connotations. For example, people consider that project means having a lot of money.
- Program is a continuing, long-term activity.
- Project is part of the program, short-term, specific and has limited resources.
- Project means not done before, has a specific objective, has a beginning and an end.

Why a planned program?

1. Many ideas
2. Some fail and some succeed

3. Fail because of no planning
4. Fail due to
   1. Lack of money
   2. Lack of manpower
   3. Lack of resources
   4. Lack of time

A good plan should be SMART

S = specific target, objectives and problem
M = measurable
A = achievable
R = realistic
T = Time- bound

Importance of a good program

- helps us do things systematically
- Is a recorded evidence of our determination
- Enhances the confidence of those who are committed to do something
- Serves as a strategic mean to receive active cooperation and collaboration between stakeholders and target groups

Approaches of planning

- Top-down approach
- Bottom-up approach
- Convergent approach

Planning consists of six steps

1. Development of vision
2. Identification of the problem
3. Formulation of the objective
4. Allocation of resources
5. Evaluation
6. Reconsiderations

1. Development of vision

- Dream
- Desirable future, a future we seek
- Broad and futuristic statement

2. Identification of the problem

- Needs assessment of the situation
- Collect data & information
  - Survey
  - Community meetings
  - Secondary information
  - Case studies
  - PRA
- Analyze the situation
- Identify the problem
- Make a clear statement

Formulation of the objective

Goal

- End point, result or intention
- Long-term
- Broad
- No time framework

Objective

- End point, result or intention
- Short-term
- Specific
- Time bound
- Realistic
- Measurable

4. Allocation of resources

- Tasks
- Manpower
- Materials
- Money
- Time, place, target,
- Responsible person
- Indicator of success
- Benefits

5. Evaluation

- Monitoring to check the activities
- Evaluation to find out strengths & weaknesses
- Find out the current status
- Find out the future direction

6. Reconsiderations
- Incorporate feedback
- Revisit the plans
- Implement if necessary

Step 2: Experience/Evaluate
- Self-evaluation of the topic, knowledge and relevancy
- First-hand experiences or application
- First-hand exposures
- Integrating theory and practice
- Let them use their six senses

Step 3: Adapt
- Identify a site
- Modify information to suit the site and the community
- Make it compatible to your needs
- Think locally and act locally

Step 4: Promote
- Enhance values of program planning
- Publicity and dissemination
- Demonstration
- Sharing knowledge with others
- Advocacy
- Capacity building
- Empowering ... ...

Your comments are welcome
- Our assumptions
- The LEAP format
- About the material presented
  - Is it simple and easy to understand?
  - Will it be useful to raise awareness?
  - Does it make a sense?
  - How and where can it be improved?